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LEGENDS
OF THE
BLESSED
SACRAMENT



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LEGENDS
OF
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

GATHERED FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

AND

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

BY

EMILY MARY SHAPCOTE.

THE
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE

Adoremus in æternum Sanctissimum Sacramentum.

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INTRODUCTION.

UNION with God is the secret of the lives of the Saints. They left all to attain it, and trod in the one only path which leads up to it. We find them humbly and simply seeking Him in the ways He has appointed, most especially affectionate to the Blessed Mother of God, and most fervently devout towards the glorious Sacrament of the Altar. The Saints by this divine union became themselves vessels of grace, of which Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the living source.

God is always the same; sanctity is always the same. If we aspire to union with God, we must follow the footsteps of the Saints. We must empty ourselves of self before we can seek to be filled with God. This is not a figure of speech, but a literal truth. We are not full of God simply because we are content to be full of self. Yet He is in the midst of us now, as He was when He spoke to St. Teresa, St. Catharine, or Blessed Margaret Mary. Why do *we* not see Him? Why do we not, like them, return love for love, when His love is so great, so magnificent, so enduring, and ought to be so constantly before our eyes? If we loved as the Saints did, we might hope to attain to the graces of the Saints. But since we do not—and we know that we do not—it is most fitting that we should seek their society with great humility and reverence, and in their company and after their example try like them to contemplate Jesus our God in the Blessed Sacrament, in order that our devotion, according to the measure which God has given us, may really, although faintly, resemble theirs.

When a believer is worthy to receive Holy Communion—that is, when his soul is in a state of grace—it is not possible to reckon all the wonderful operations of grace which the participation of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ produces in him. These come from the interior union which takes place therein with Jesus the God-Man. Our Lord has Himself given us to understand this when He says, ‘Whosoever eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, he dwelleth in Me and I in him’ (St. John vi. 57). As bread when it is eaten becomes one with man, becomes a part of his flesh, and of his blood, ‘so,’ saith St. John Chrysostom, ‘He mingleth Himself with us, we become one existence with Him, whereby we are one whole with Him, being with Him one flesh and one body.’ He becometh the Soul of our soul, as it were, and the Life of our life. The man no longer lives of himself, but ‘Christ liveth in him,’ according to St. Paul, and according to our Lord’s own words; ‘I live, now not I; but Christ

liveth in Me ;' ' Whoso eateth Me dwelleth in Me, and I in him ;' ' Whoso eateth Me, he shall live by Me.'

This marvellous grace must be borne in mind whilst we contemplate those miraculous circumstances which the lives of many Saints present to us in consequence of their personal and intimate union with the Divine Redeemer. In His wisdom He has allowed many of the effects of this union to be visibly manifested in the persons of some of His devoted servants, in order that the mystery of godliness may be shown in the midst of an unbelieving world, and that weaker souls may be strengthened and inflamed to higher efforts after holiness. The supernatural life is not only to be found in the Saints ; it is in all who, through participation in the Sacred Humanity, are sacramentally united to God. The soul of every baptised Christian is raised to a supernatural state ; and it is the grace of this state, either in extraordinary measure or corresponded with in an extraordinary degree, which in the case of certain Saints has overflowed and become visible in its effects to the eyes of others.* Although each of these supernatural manifestations was of the free bounty of God, yet without correspondence with grace and the resolute will to suffer everything for the love of God, such manifestations would not have been possible, according to the ordinary law of God, in dealing with His creatures. All these extraordinary external effects are so many proofs of internal sanctity, which is at all times independent of external manifestation, and exists in most cases without it. How far manifestations of rapture which have taken place in the form of suspension in the air during the celebration of Holy Mass or the devout contemplation of the Holy Mysteries, as in the case of St. John of the Cross, St. Alphonsus de Liguori, St. Teresa, and very many others, may follow a supernatural law, it is impossible for us to say. In many instances, however, natural laws have been suspended, in order to fulfil some special providence with regard to the honour of God, as in the case of water being stayed in the time of floods from reaching the spot where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved (see ' Miracle in the Chapel of the Gray Penitents at Avignon, A.D. 1433'). In cases where the consecrated Host has passed to the lips of some servant of God who was secretly longing for the presence of the Divine Spouse, or when It has been elevated in the air on the occasion of sacrilege or danger, the ministry of angels may be admitted, as well as in those cases when devout souls have been miraculously fed by those whom we must believe to have been angels in human form, as in the case of the Venerable Catharine of Jesus, A.D. 1510.

* Upon this subject Father Louis Lallemant, S.J., in his *Spiritual Doctrine*, remarks : ' A soul which by mortification is thoroughly cured of its passions, and by purity of heart is established in a state of perfect health, is admitted to a wonderful knowledge of God, and discovers things so great that it loses its power of acting through its senses. Hence proceed raptures and ecstasies, which indicate, however, by the impression which they produce in those who have them, that they are not altogether purified or accustomed to extraordinary graces ; for in proportion as a soul purifies itself, the mind becomes stronger and more capable of bearing divine operations without emotion or suspension of the senses, as in the cases of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles and certain other Saints, whose minds were continually occupied with the most sublime contemplations, united with wonderful interior transports, but without there being anything apparent externally in the way of raptures and ecstasies.'

No words can add to the simple majesty and beauty of these revelations of the Divine Presence amongst us. The narration of them throws a great light on the beauty of the supernatural life of a soul in a state of grace. We feel in studying these wonders of the Eucharistic union that, marvellous as are these signs of overflowing grace, that which is seen poorly shadows forth that which is *not* seen. We may feel the heat and see the glow of the rays of light, but the inward caresses of the Heavenly Spouse are a mystery to such as we are. In all cases the outward manifestation was the thing least regarded by the Saint himself, and, if perceived, acknowledged only so far as it was impossible to conceal it. It is because unbelievers have lost sight of what the Real Presence is that they cannot accept marvels which are little in truth by the side of those far more wondrous graces which produced them. Perfect love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the most intimate union with the Sacred Humanity in Holy Communion are the sources of all that appears marvellous in this book. But no one who has learned even a little of that love and tasted even a little of the sweetness of that union will find anything hard to believe in the following beautiful Legends of Saints who have been canonised by the infallible voice of the Church.

E. M. S.

Lent 1877.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE ROMAN CATACOMBS	I
SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN THE ROMAN CATACOMBS	4
MARTYRDOM OF ST. SIXTUS II.	9
LEGEND OF ST. TARCISSE	11
THE ALTAR OF THE EARLY CHURCH	11
COMMUNION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS	14
THE SAINTS OF THE DESERT	18
ST. IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, MARTYR, A.D. 107	20
ST. EUDOXIA, MARTYR, A.D. 147	21
FACTS RELATED BY ST. CYPRIAN, B.M., A.D. 257	22
ST. CORNELIUS AND SERAPION, A.D. 264	22
ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM, A.D. 389	23
ST. BASIL AND THE CONVERTED JEW, A.D. 379	23
ST. GREGORY, BISHOP OF TOURS, A.D. 595. HOW THE JEWISH CHILD WAS PRESERVED UNHURT IN THE FIERY FURNACE AFTER RECEIVING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	24
THE DEVOTION OF ST. WENCESLAS, DUKE OF BOHEMIA, TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, A.D. 936	24
ST. GREGORY THE GREAT DURING THE PLAGUE IN ROME, A.D. 604	26
HOW THE HOLY EUCHARIST WAS CHANGED INTO GOLDEN EARS OF WHEAT FOR THE CONVERSION OF A HERETIC WHO WAS IN GOOD FAITH, A.D. 612	27
ST. BERNARD AND DUKE WILLIAM OF AQUITAINE, A.D. 1131	28
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT DELIVERS A CITY OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY, A.D. 1242	29
ST. CLARE DELIVERS THE CITY OF ASSISI BY THE POWER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, A.D. 1253	32
MIRACLE IN ST. SAVIOUR'S CHAPEL AT RATISBON, A.D. 1255	33
THE INSTITUTION OF THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI, A.D. 1260	35
ST. JULIANA OF CORNILLON, A.D. 1260	35
THE MIRACLE OF BOLSENA, A.D. 1264	38
ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN AND ST. BONAVENTURA, A.D. 1264. THE OFFICE AND MASS OF CORPUS CHRISTI	39
WONDERFUL DEATH OF A PRIEST AND HIS TWO SERVERS AT HOLY MASS, A.D. 1265	43
ORIGIN OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY GHOST AT SLAVINGS IN MORAVIA, A.D. 1280	44
DEATH OF ST. MECHTILDE, A.D. 1297	45
THE MIRACULOUS HOSTS OF DEGGENDORF, A.D. 1337	47
THE MIRACULOUS HOSTS AT BRUSSELS, A.D. 1370	49
ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA, A.D. 1380	50
THE BLOOD-RED HOST AT SEEFELD, A.D. 1384	53
MIRACLE IN THE CHAPEL OF THE GRAY PENITENTS AT AVIGNON, A.D. 1433	54
ST. LIDWINA, A.D. 1433	55
ST. COLUMBA OF RIETI, A.D. 1467	56
THREE MIRACLES RELATED BY THOMAS À KEMPIS IN HIS CHRONICLES OF THE CONVENT OF MOUNT ST. AGNES, A.D. 1471	57
ST. JOAN OF VALOIS, A.D. 1505	58

	PAGE
THE VENERABLE CATHARINE OF JESUS, A.D. 1510	59
ST. CATHARINE OF GENOA, A.D. 1510	60
ST. CAJETAN, A.D. 1547	62
THE ORIGIN OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION AND THE EXPOSITION OF THE FORTY HOURS, A.D. 1547	65
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER RAISES THE DEAD TO LIFE AND HEALS THE SICK THROUGH THE POWER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, A.D. 1552	65
DEVOTION OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA TO THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS, A.D. 1556	67
ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA, A.D. 1562	69
GLORIOUS VICTORY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OVER SATAN, A.D. 1566	71
ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA, A.D. 1568	77
MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF THE PARISH PRIEST OF MONCADA, IN SPAIN, FROM ANGUISH OF SPIRIT, A.D. 1570	79
THE NINETEEN MARTYRS OF GORKUM FOR THE HONOUR OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, A.D. 1572	80
ST. FRANCIS BORGIA, A.D. 1572	83
ST. TERESA, A.D. 1582	84
PUNISHMENT OF A MAIDEN WHO RECEIVED HOLY COMMUNION NOT FASTING, A.D. 1584	87
ST. MARY MAGDALEN OF PAZZI, A.D. 1585	88
BROTHER DEO GRATIAS, ST. FELIX OF CANTALICE, A.D. 1587	89
LOVE FOR THE BLESSED SACRAMENT REWARDED BY A MIRACULOUS CONVERSION, A.D. 1590	93
THE CATECHISM OF PETER CANISIUS, A.D. 1590	95
ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, A.D. 1591	98
THE PLAGUE AT MILAN, A.D. 1575	101
ST. PHILIP NERI, A.D. 1595	103
THE VENERABLE URSULA BENINCASA, A.D. 1580	105
THE MONSTRANCE OF FAVERNÉ, A.D. 1333	106
ST. FRANCIS SOLANO, A.D. 1610	107
ST. ROSE OF LIMA, A.D. 1617	108
BLESSED JOHN BERCHMANS, A.D. 1621	111
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES	113
THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT IN THE LOUVRE AT PARIS, A.D. 1661	115
BLESSED JOANNA OF THE CROSS, A.D. 1673	116
BLESSED MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION, A.D. 1690	118
THE PESTILENCE IN PROVENCE STAYED BY THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART, A.D. 1720	123
MIRACULOUS CURE OF A WOMAN BY MEANS OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT, A.D. 1725	124
ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE, A.D. 1751	126
ST. JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO, A.D. 1767	129
BLESSED IMELDA LAMBERTINA OF BOLOGNA	132
BLESSED ANNE CATHARINE EMMERICH, A.D. 1774-1824	132
ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS, A.D. 1775	135
BLESSED BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE, A.D. 1783	137
ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH, A.D. 1787	140
ST. MARY FRANCIS OF THE FIVE WOUNDS, A.D. 1791	143
A MIRACLE OF HEALING AT CRETEIL ON THE SEINE, A.D. 1802	148
MARY LATASTE, LAY-SISTER OF THE ORDER OF THE SACRED HEART, A.D. 1822-1847	149
THE VENERABLE ANNA MARIA TAIGI, A.D. 1837	155
MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF A JEW BY MEANS OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST, A.D. 1862	158
MIRACULOUS APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD IN THE CONSECRATED HOST, A.D. 1865	161
ANOTHER APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD IN THE CONSECRATED HOST, A.D. 1867	162
THE PIOUS MAIDEN MARY VON MÖRL, USUALLY KNOWN AS THE ÉSTATICA, A.D. 1868	162
PIUS IX., A.D. 1848	165

LEGENDS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

THE ROMAN CATACOMBS.

THROUGH the preaching of the holy Apostles Christians began to multiply in every city, so that in the year 66 the heathen historian Tacitus spoke of them in Rome as being innumerable. No wonder, then, as Satan found his reign coming to an end, that he should arise, and with hellish devices endeavour to root out the Christian name from the face of the earth. The heathen, to whom the preaching of the Cross was foolishness, were his willing agents, and so much the more as the pure lives of the Christians were a silent judgment upon their own. ‘Ye shall be hated of all men, for My name’s sake,’ began from the earliest days to be verified.

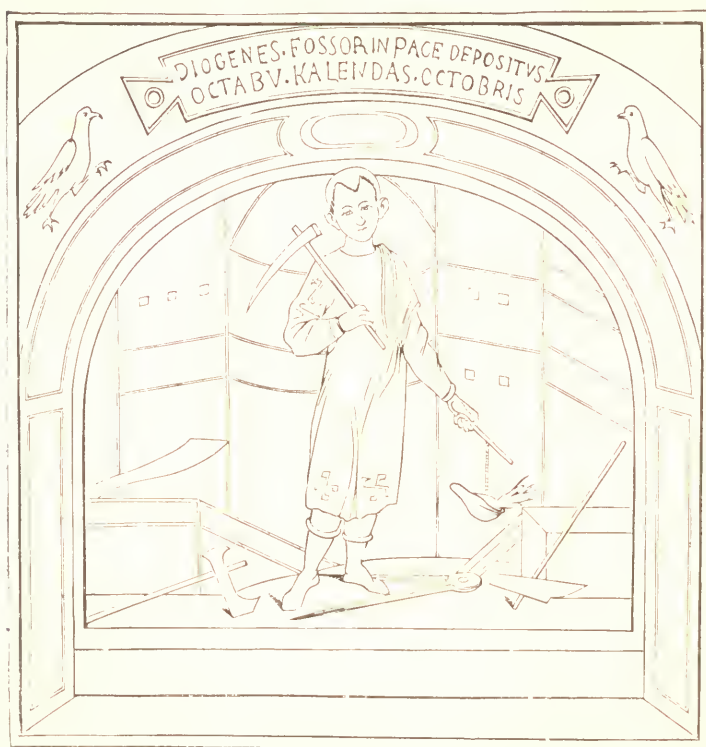
The combination of simplicity and mystery which surrounded the name of Christians, and which defied all attempts to be unravelled, excited so much the more distrust as it was impossible to find any true and specific charge to lay against them. Every kind of imaginable wickedness was therefore imputed to them; and the mysterious tradition which reached the ears of the heathen through the mouth of the Jews, that in the feast of the Christians they made an offering in which they received the flesh and the blood of the victim, was the cause of the frightful accusation laid to their charge of offering up innocent children in order that they might eat their flesh and drink their blood. The meaning of the doctrine of the Most Holy Eucharist as well as the solemn ceremonies connected with it were hidden from the heathen, seeing that this supreme Mystery belonged to the secret teaching of the Church.

So secret, indeed, were all the circumstances relating to this most glorious Sacrament kept, that no unbaptised person was permitted to receive instruction on it, and catechumens were dismissed from the churches ere the most solemn part of the Mysteries began. To speak of them before the uninitiated was so great a crime that only heretics and apostates dared to do it.

But however carefully the first Christians concealed the teaching of the Church from Jews and Pagans, they have left behind them the clearest proofs of their belief in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament, and of the adoration due to His most Sacred Body and Blood therein received. Had they in their assemblies offered and consumed but ordinary bread and wine, they would have done so before the whole world without danger or fear of persecution.

This mystery extended not merely to words and writings, but even to the places where our fathers in the Faith assembled together for the worship of God in times of danger and persecution; and here they have left behind them memorials of a most striking kind, which witness to their belief in the Most Holy and Adorable Eucharist.

Without the walls of the city of Rome there exists a subterranean city—the city of the dead of the first centuries of the Christian era, and commonly known as the Catacombs. The ancient name for them was cemeteries, ‘sleeping-places;’ but in modern times they have received an appellation which originally belonged to one cemetery, the Catacombs. Under this title are now understood all those consecrated places underground where in times of persecution the early Christians buried their dead. They consist of long labyrinths of intersecting passages, varying in height and width according to the nature of the ground.



MEMORIAL OVER THE TOMB OF DIOGENES THE GRAVE-DIGGER (*fossor*).

Occasionally there are excavated chambers, of every size and description, ornamented with frescoes. These passages are to be found in clusters, at distances varying from two to six miles from the walls of ancient Rome, along the high-roads; and it is calculated that the united length of these subterranean corridors exceeds three hundred and fifty miles in extent. There are reckoned to be about forty-three Catacombs, twenty-six larger and seventeen of smaller size, according to the extent of the beds of *tufa*, a soft volcanic rock, out of which they are excavated. They were first commenced in the earliest Christian ages, and have been proved by the recent discoveries of M. de Rossi to have been exclusively the work of Christians. These, bearing in

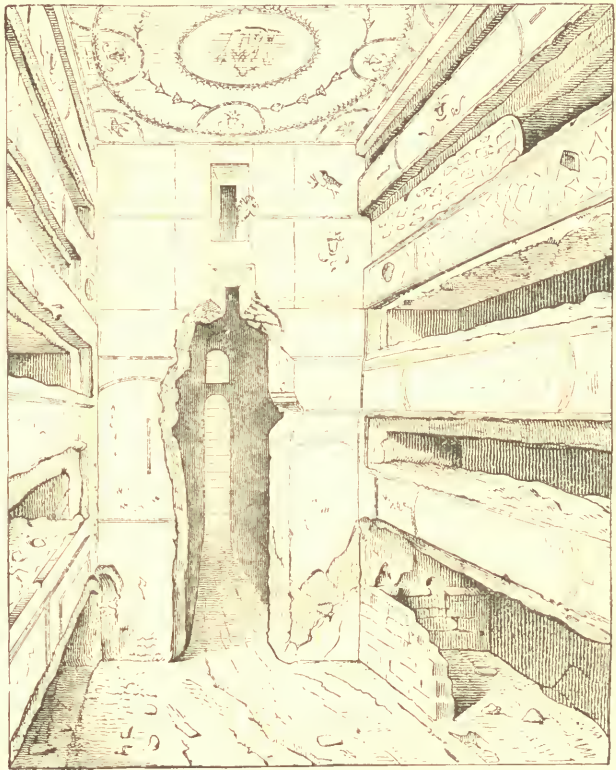
mind how the body of our Divine Lord was laid in a new sepulchre which had been hewn in the rock, were anxious to provide for their departed ones a similar resting-place, so that in death as well as in life they might be followers of Him.

This mode of burial was practised by the Jews in Rome in the first century; and some few ancient Roman families, like the Scipios, still kept up the practice of their Etruscan ancestors, and refused to bury their dead. But an entirely new feature is found in the Christian cemeteries, marking them off sharply from both their Jewish and Pagan contemporaries. Christian charity urged many of the noblest patricians who had embraced the Faith to open their private burial-places to their humbler brethren; and thus as early as the third century

each of the *tituli*, or parish churches, in Rome had its own cemetery outside the walls. Down to the middle of that century the Christian burial-places continued under the protection of the Roman law, which held all graves to be holy and inviolable.

History has handed down to us the names of many noble women—Domitilla, Lucina, Priscilla, Cyriaca, &c.—who made use of their properties as Christian grave-yards, and received into their own family vaults the bodies of the blessed Martyrs. Often the Martyrs names have been attached to their respective cemeteries; and the names of St. Sebastian, St. Laurence, SS. Nereus and Achilleus, and others have been given to those in which the bodies of these blessed Martyrs were laid.

The business of excavating these halls of the dead, with the graves and mortuary chapels therein contained, was intrusted to a confraternity of *fossores* (*grave-diggers*). These devoted men, who belonged for the most part to the working classes, resembled holy Tobias, who hid the dead by day and buried them by night. Their work, besides being extremely arduous, was full of danger. How courageously must they have penetrated into the bowels of the earth, and by the dim light of their lamps hewn out those corridors in the solid tufa! In the side-walls of the passages the graves, called *loculi*, are excavated one above another, to the number of six or more, according to the height of the passage; sometimes as many as fourteen graves being so disposed one above another. When a corridor was filled with the dead it was deepened, and thus more space was found for graves. When this could not safely be carried farther a fresh set of passages was excavated underneath the first; and in this way there is an instance of five such corridors being formed one over the other, frequently crossing each other in different directions.



CUBICULUM, WITH CORRIDOR, SIDE-WALLS, AND GRAVES.

In the graves were buried one and sometimes two bodies. The Christians spared no pains to get the bodies of the Martyrs out of the hands of the executioner. They would beg or purchase them from the magistrates, secrete them from the watchman, carry them away under cover of the darkness of night through the streets of the city, in order to take them to their resting-places underground, where finally they would wash, embalm, and bury them. The grave was then carefully closed up with tiles or a slab of marble, and furnished with an inscription—generally a rude one—of the name, age, and day of interment of the deceased, with a few touching words annexed, such as ‘In pace,’ ‘Vivas in Deo,’ ‘Vivas in eternum.’ The family and rank are seldom mentioned.

Besides these graves in the walls of the corridors, the fossore excavated separate vaults for private Christian families. For this purpose little square or hexagonal vaulted chambers, called *cubicula*, were excavated, in whose walls the graves were dug, and the vaulted roofs of which were highly adorned, as may be seen in the chromolithographs of De Rossi, taken from the Catacomb of St. Callixtus.

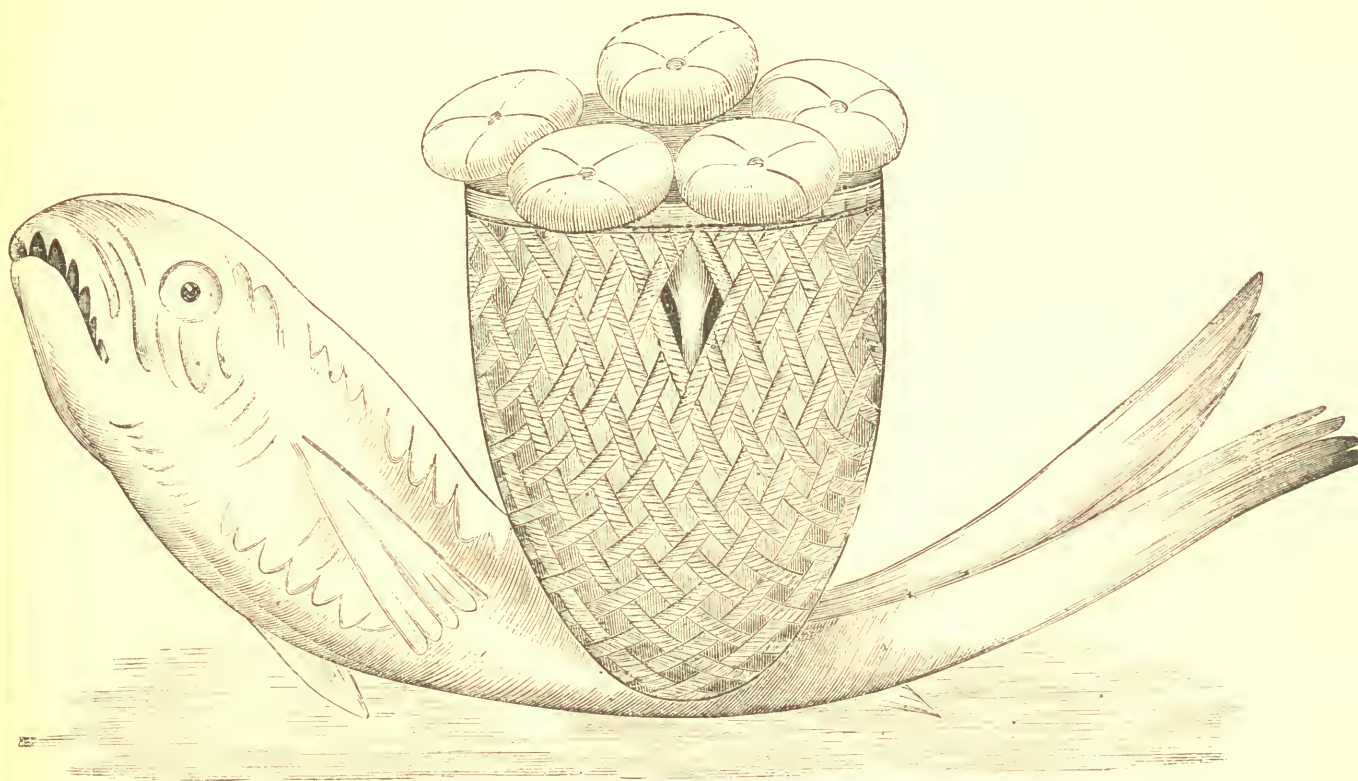
In many of these *cubicula*, or grave-chambers, may be seen a vaulted niche, under which, upon the flat ground, is a raised stone coffin covered with a stone or marble lid. Sometimes the coffin is cut out of the solid rock, and covered in the same way. In such coffins were one, two, or even more, bodies of the holy Martyrs laid. The lid or slab of the coffin served as an altar. This kind of vaulted memorial of the dead was called an *arcosolium*, and the chambers in which they are to be found were sometimes used as chapels. In some cases these chambers have an opening to the surface of the ground overhead, for the admission of light and air; and such a room was called *cubiculum clarum*, a 'light-room,' and the aperture above was the *luminare*.

SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN THE ROMAN CATACOMBS.

The frightful calumnies against the Christians, and the blasphemous parodies of their sacred rites by the early Gnostic heretics, caused the faithful to guard with the strictest secrecy all that appertained to the august Sacrament of the Altar. During the ages of persecution the Divine Liturgy itself appears to have been handed down by memory rather than to have been committed to writing; and, with the exception of the guarded explanations in the Apologies of St. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, no insight into the 'Sacred Mysteries' was allowed to the profane pagan world. Even the Cross itself was variously disguised, so as not to attract attention; and it would have been utterly repugnant to the spirit of early Christianity to have represented in painting or sculpture so sacred a scene as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is therefore not difficult for Protestants to put their own construction on the absence of such scenes from the frescoes in the Catacombs, and to argue that, because we do not see representations of vested priests, and altars with lights and incense, therefore such ceremonial rites were unknown to primitive antiquity. Such plausible arguments, however, can only satisfy those who are determined to be satisfied. The earnest inquirer will seek for the interpretation of those figures which are found on the walls of the subterranean chapels, and will be guided as to their interpretation, not by the heated imagination of controversialists, but by the sober and obvious rule of comparing the symbols in the Catacombs with the symbolic expressions commonly used by Christian writers of the same, or nearly the same, period.

For instance, in one of the chambers of the crypt of St. Lucina, near to the tomb of St. Cornelius, a symbol is painted twice over, of which our illustration is not a very exact copy. There is a fish bearing on its back a basket with loaves of bread on the top of it, while through the open wicker-work of the basket may be seen the form of a cup coloured red, as if containing a red liquid. This chamber and its frescoes are shown by De Rossi to be as ancient as the second century. Now what did the artist mean by this strange combination?

Fancy might suggest endless interpretations; but our rule bids us seek for the interpretation among the writers of that age. St. Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia towards the end of the second century, describes on his epitaph his travels through Syria and to Rome, and concludes: 'Faith led me on the road, and set before me for food fish from the one fountain, the great and spotless fish which the pure Virgin embraced; and this fish she gave to friends to eat everywhere, having good wine, giving wine mixed with water, and bread. May he who understands these things pray for me!' Here is evidently the same symbol—fish, bread, wine. It is tolerably clear what is meant by the fish; but all ambiguity is removed by turning to Tertullian, who about the year 200 wrote: 'We little fishes are born



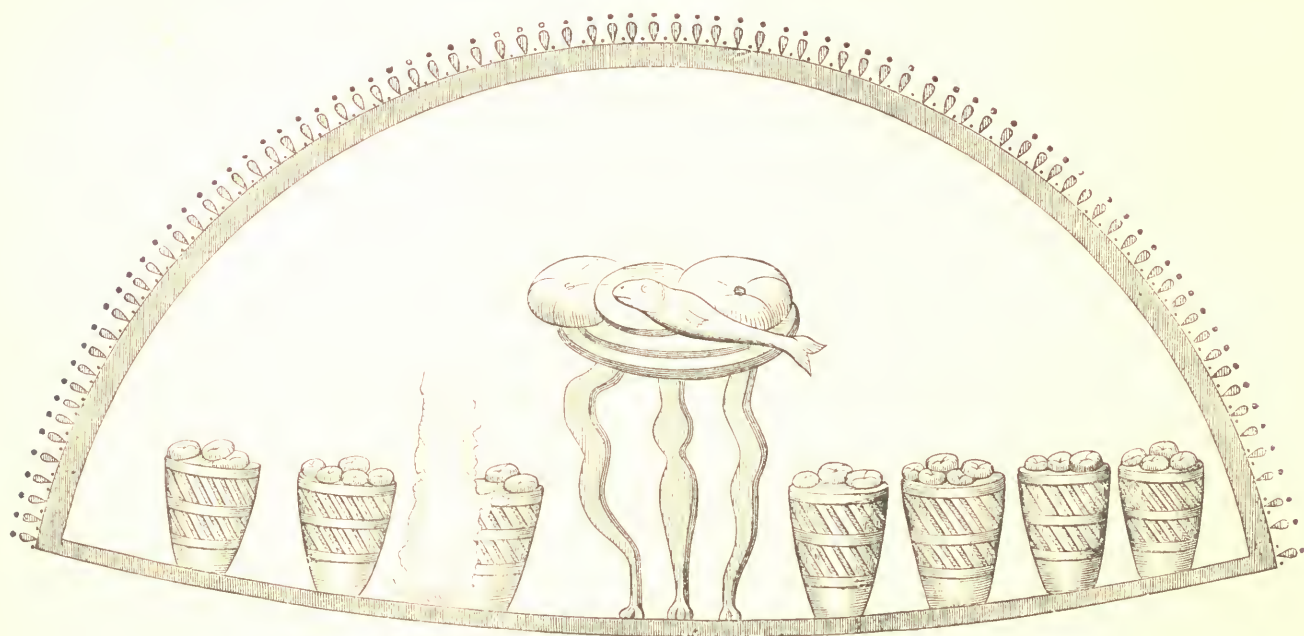
SYMBOL OF THE FISH, WITH THE BASKET OF LOAVES.

in water after our Fish (ΙΧΘΥΝ) Jesus Christ' (*De Bapt.* ii.). Jesus Christ, then, is the 'great Fish . . . having good wine and bread.' And this strange symbol turns out to be simply the pictorial reply of the Christian of the second century to the question, 'What is the Holy Eucharist?' 'It is the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine.'

When and how the fish became the universally received symbol for Christ we know not; but it is worthy of notice that, in the passage quoted above from Tertullian, a Latin writer uses the Greek word for fish. Now this Greek word ΙΧΘΥΣ is composed of the initial letters of the words *Ιησους* (Jesus), *Χριστος* (Christ), *Θεος* (God), *Υιος* (the Son), *Σωτηρ* (Saviour). The

fish therefore suggested to the Christian a compendium of his faith, while it was utterly unintelligible to the pagan. The pagan officers, who inspected the Catacombs as long as they were under the sanction of the Roman law, could find no fault with so innocuous a symbol, while its multiplication in every variety of form shows how precious it was to the Christians. In the form represented in our illustration it constitutes a compendium of the Catholic Faith in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. When De Rossi first discovered this painting he was at once reminded of a sentence of St. Jerome, who, in speaking of Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse, who had expended all his substance on relieving the poor, says: ‘Nothing, however, can be richer than the one who carries the Body of Christ in a basket made of twigs, and the Blood of Christ in a chalice of glass’ (*Ad Rusticum*).

Another combination of the fish and the bread is to be seen in the following illustration,



SYMBOL OF THE SEVEN BASKETS, WITH THE MULTIPLIED LOAVES AND FISHES; IN THE CENTRE A TRIPOD ALTAR.

copied from a fresco in one of the *cubicula* near to the Papal crypt in the Catacomb of St. Callixtus. Here we have the seven baskets, with the fragments of the miraculously multiplied loaves and fishes; but in the centre stands a tripod altar, such as was used by the heathen in their offerings of firstfruits, and upon it three loaves and a fish. There are here the same symbols as before, with the additional idea that it is from the Christian altar that the multitudes of the faithful are supplied with the Divine Fish, who is also the Bread of God.

In an adjoining chamber, also of the third century, is another painting which appears to combine the Christian Agapè with the miraculous feeding of the multitudes. The guests are seated at a semicircular table, or, as it may be otherwise interpreted, a grassy mound, in front of which are two fishes and a row of eight baskets of fragments. The eighth basket suggests

that the picture is not to be regarded as historical, but that the spectator was to carry his mind beyond the literal earthly feast to the heavenly spiritual banquet which it typified. And thus we have a symbolical representation of Holy Communion.

In an ancient Christian cemetery at Alexandria, hewn out of the solid rock like the Roman Catacombs, a painting round the apse beneath which once stood the altar exists representing the feast in the desert. The names of Jesus Christ, with Peter and Andrew on either side, leave no doubt for whom the principal figures are intended. 'Holy Mary' and 'the servants' work out other figures; while on the opposite side are a group of persons seated, with the inscription over them, 'eating the benedictions of Christ.' The same word (*eulogias*) is used by St. Paul in 1 Cor. x. 16, where he is speaking of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; and it is the very word used by St. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, to denote the Holy Eucharist.

We may sum up our remarks on this painting in the words of Dr. Northcote (*Roma Sotterranea*, p. 222): 'We have been accused of attempting to connect the fish with the doctrine of Transubstantiation. What we have really done is to prove by abundant testimonies that when fish and bread were represented together on ancient Christian monuments there was meant a secret reference to the Holy Eucharist, of which the bread denotes the outward and visible form, the fish the inward and hidden reality, viz. Christ Jesus our Lord.' In the pregnant words of the inscription of Autun, ascribed by Cardinal Pitra and others to the second century, these symbolical paintings speak to the faithful: 'Eat and drink, holding the Fish (IXΘΥΝ) in your two hands.'

Besides the grave-chambers, or chapels, the Catacombs contain also rooms of a much larger size. It would often happen, in times of persecution, that the number of believers and priests would be so great as to necessitate much larger places of worship than little rooms. On this account the fossiores employed themselves in hewing out small churches in the tufa, which they adorned very beautifully. In these may be seen in the background, under a single arch (shown in the Catacomb of St. Agnes), an arcosolium (altar-tomb), upon which the Holy Sacrifice could be offered. Near this is placed the stone seat for the Bishop, and along the wall a stone bench for the sacred ministers. For a credence a niche in the wall was provided, or a slab of stone and marble, forming a table, would be inserted in it. Beyond the sanctuary stood the men of the congregation, and in a cubiculum adjoining were assembled the women apart; for in the early days of Christianity they were strictly separated from the men. They were, however, able to see through a wide opening made into the church, and thus they were able to assist at the Divine Mysteries. In a passage between the two knelt the penitents; and in the ceiling or vault over this passage was placed the *luminare*, which gave air and light at once to both the chapels.

Now it was in these subterranean chapels that the early Christians sought refuge in times of persecution, and where, from the days of St. Peter until those of St. Marcellus (a period of nearly three hundred years), a whole set of Popes, some for a longer and some for a shorter period of time—St. Caius indeed for eight years—dwelt.

The sanctity of the tombs, and the danger of being lost in the multitudinous ramifications of those dark passages, considerably stood in the way of frequent attempts being made by the enemies of the Christian name to disturb the faithful in their hiding-places. Notwithstanding,

at length it happened that the graves of the Christian dead were no guarantee for their safety. St. Emerentia was stoned to death in a grave-chapel; St. Candida was thrown through a *luminare*; and at another time a whole band of Christians were enclosed alive in the sepulchre of the holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria.

In the year 258, we know from a letter of St. Cyprian that the Holy Pontiff Sixtus II., with four of his deacons, was martyred in the Catacombs. The same glorious death is ascribed



GRAVE-CHAMBER, OR CUBICULUM, WITH AN ARCOSOLIUM IN THE BACKGROUND: CATACOMB OF ST. AGNES.

to his predecessor, St. Stephen; but there is good ground for thinking that the names of the two Popes have been confused by transcribers of the Acts, and that the circumstances narrated of St. Stephen belong properly to St. Sixtus II. The pilgrims of the fourth century have covered the plaster of the entrance to this chapel with invocations to St. Sixtus; whereas, if St. Stephen had also suffered here, we should have probably met with his name in their *graffiti*

MARTYRDOM OF ST. SIXTUS II.

It was the year 258. The Emperor Valerian, under the pressure of the fanatical clamours against the Christians, which the misfortunes of the empire had excited, had the year before renewed the persecution of the Church with greater severity than had been exercised even by Decius. For the first time the sanctity of the tomb was no refuge for the persecuted followers of Jesus. The imperial decree of 257 forbade the Christians to frequent 'what they called their *cemeteries*.' But the apostolic precept, 'not to forsake the assembly' (Heb. x. 25), was a law superior to the Emperor's edict, and in the narrow subterranean chapels of the Catacombs the faithful assisted at the Holy Sacrifice. The satellites of the Emperor jealously watched the entrances to the principal cemeteries. The great cemetery of St. Callixtus was naturally a special object of their attention; consequently on the 6th of August the Holy Pontiff Sixtus II. selected the cemetery of St. Prætextatus as the place where he would celebrate the Sacred Mysteries. It was a spot consecrated already by more than one hundred years of sacred associations. There had the tribune St. Quirinus, who suffered for the Faith in the time of Adrian, been laid to rest. There had the noble matron Marmenia built a vaulted chamber underground, in which she buried the sacred remains of St. Januarius, the eldest of the seven martyred sons of St. Felicitas, whose epitaph by Pope Damasus has been brought to light only of late years. There had Valerian, the martyred spouse of St. Cecilia, with his brother Tibertius, and Maximus their companion in martyrdom, been carried to the grave; and the holy Bishop Urban, who had instructed them in the Faith in this very Catacomb, was soon afterwards buried in one of its chapels. And now a procession of future Martyrs passes along the unusually spacious corridor of this ancient cemetery.

The most noted shrine in this cemetery was the tomb of St. Januarius; and thither, we may well presume, the procession bent its way. The deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus prepare the altar, while the archdeacon Laurence attends closely upon the venerable Pontiff. Preëminent for his manly beauty, ardently loved by all the poor and afflicted among the faithful, the finely-cut features of the archdeacon glow with an unwonted halo of sanctity as he assists the Pope to vest and to commence the Holy Sacrifice. The Mass proceeds, the faithful have received from the hands of Sixtus the Bread of Heaven, and the Pontiff, with his deacons around him, is seated in the stone chair beside the altar, and begins to address the faithful. Suddenly a distant scream of alarm is heard—the clatter of arms and the trampling of many feet approach hastily along the corridor. Those who are unable to escape are encouraged by the calm serenity of the sacred ministers, while their hearts are strengthened by the almost inspired words of the Pope. A traitor has led the myrmidons of Valerian into the recesses of the Catacomb; and now they seize the seven deacons, and lay their sacrilegious hands upon the sacred person of the Vicar of Christ. He entreats them to take his life, but to spare his flock: 'If you seek me, let these go their way.'

When they reached the city, the guards who held St. Lawrence proceeded to separate him from the rest; and now, for the first time, a bitter cry of sorrow burst from his heart. It seemed as though the glorious crown of martyrdom were about to be snatched from his grasp, and he alone of the deacons of Rome was not to share the honour of joining their beloved

Pontiff in the last great sacrifice. ‘Father,’ he cried to St. Sixtus, ‘whither are you going without your son? Whither are you going, O priest, without your deacon? You were never wont to offer sacrifice without me as your minister. Wherein have I displeased you? Have you found me wanting to my duty? Try me now, and see whether you have made choice of an unfit minister for dispensing the Blood of the Lord.’ St. Sixtus, touched to the heart at the appeal of the noble youth, consoled him in words that showed how thoroughly he appreciated the character of his favourite deacon. ‘I do not leave you, my son,’ he said; ‘but a greater trial and a more glorious victory are reserved for you, who are strong and in the vigour of youth. We are spared on account of our weakness and age. In three days you shall follow me.’ He then privately gave the archdeacon a charge to distribute among the poor all the treasures of the Church, and even the gold chalices and silver candlesticks, which had excited the cupidity of the prefect. Sixtus was then conducted before the judges, and condemned to death for disobeying the edict of the Emperor. In order to give greater emphasis to the prohibition against frequenting the Catacombs, Sixtus and four of his deacons were condemned to be executed in the very chapel where they had been apprehended.

Again the cemetery of Prætextatus echoed with the tramp of armed men. Again did the faithful timidly throng the entrance to the subterranean chapel, which remained just as it had been left when the sermon of St. Sixtus had been so rudely interrupted. But St. Laurence was no longer by the side of the Pope. He was preparing for his own glorious martyrdom. The venerable Pontiff was thrust into his episcopal chair, and a soldier struck off his head, so that the chair was stained by his blood. Felicissimus and Agapitus, and two other deacons, received their crown at the same time, and were afterwards buried by the faithful in the chapel of St. Januarius. The precious remains of St. Sixtus were reverently conveyed in the darkness of the night to the adjoining cemetery of St. Callixtus, and deposited in the most honourable position in the crypt, where so many of the martyr-Popes already lay. The chair, red with his blood, was either now, or at a later period, removed also; and recent explorations have brought to light some fragments of the inscription set up over it by Pope Damasus, of which the following is a translation :

‘At the time when the sword of persecution pierced the tender heart of our Mother the Church
I, the Pontiff buried here, was teaching the heavenly precepts.
All at once they come; they seized me seated on my chair—
The soldiers had been sent. Then did the people give their necks to the slaughter.
The old man soon perceived who wish’d to bear away the palm,
And was the first to offer himself and his own life,
That the impatient fury of the heathen might not injure any of his flock.
Christ, who gives the rewards of life, manifests
The merit of the pastor; and He Himself defends the multitude of the flock.’

St. Cyprian of Carthage, in a letter which he desired to be circulated throughout Africa, describing this persecution of Valerian, which he daily expected to fall upon himself, says: ‘But know that Sixtus was martyred in the cemetery on the eighth day of the Ides of August, and with him four deacons.’ The plaster of the entrance to this Papal crypt is covered with the *graffiti* of pilgrims of the third and fourth centuries, and no name is so frequently invoked as that of St. Sixtus II. One example must suffice: ‘*Sancte Siete in mente habeas in orationes Aureliu Repentinu*,—Holy Sixtus, bear in mind in thy prayers Aurelius Repentinus.’ On the

plaster of a *loculus* cut in the arch above the altar-slab in the chapel of St. Januarius, probably about the time of St. Damasus, is still to be seen a rude inscription: ‘Januarius Felicissimus, Agapitus, refresh the soul of . . .’—the unknown person buried there; while more than one sepulchral stone in the same Catacomb of St. Prætextatus bears the figure of an episcopal chair rudely engraven upon it, to show how vividly the memory of the holy Pontiff martyred at his post was preserved on the spot consecrated by his blood.

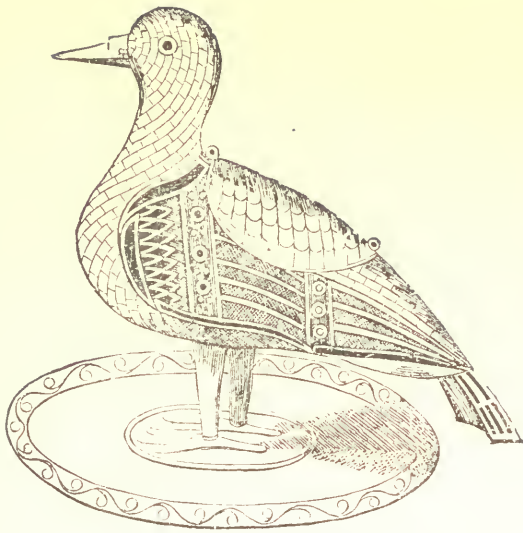
LEGEND OF ST. TARISSUS.

The day following the glorious martyrdom of the Holy Father it was decided to send the Holy Eucharist to the faithful, who, in spite of the persecution, remained in the city, in order to fit them for martyrdom. Tarcissus, an acolyth, being invested with this high commission, wrapped the Bread of Life in fair linen, and concealed it in his bosom. On arriving, however, at the walls of the city, not far from the spot where the church ‘Domine quo vadis’ now stands, he was met by a party of soldiers, who seized him and demanded of him what he carried. Tarcissus, in obedience to the command of secrecy, was silent. At once he fell under a shower of stones and blows, dying a Martyr to the honour of the Blessed Sacrament. The soldiers turned his body over and over, searched through his garments, and found—*nothing!* Seized with fear, they fled towards the Cappena gate, where they met a number of Christians upon the point of descending into the Catacomb in order to celebrate the funeral of their murdered Pope. The soldiers then informed the Emperor of what they had seen; and in consequence Valerian prohibited the Christians from entering into the Catacombs.

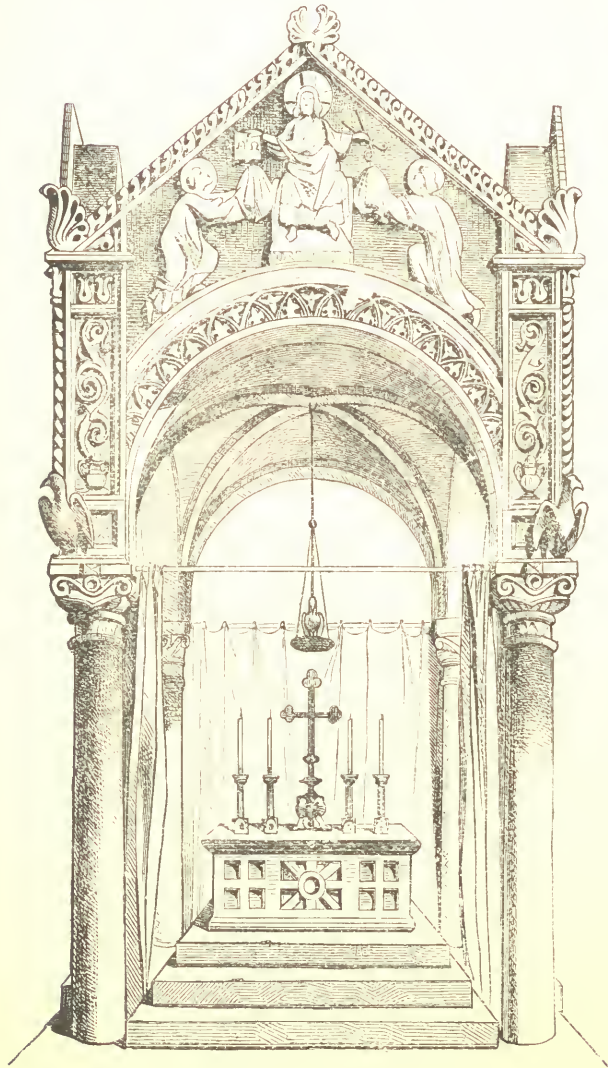
THE ALTAR OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

The signification of the Christian altar is threefold. In the first place, it is the *place of sacrifice*—that is to say, the place where Jesus Christ Himself is offered in the midst of His visible Church. For this reason, the altar is a figure of that table upon which our Divine Lord instituted the Holy Sacrifice; and more emphatically still is it the figure of the Cross of Calvary, and even of His most Holy Body, which was the very altar itself on which and by which Jesus Christ consummated His Sacrifice for mankind. Secondly, the altar is the dwelling-place, ‘the throne of the Body and Blood of the Lord;’ as, says St. Optatus, it is the holy mountain of God, the altar of the Heavenly Jerusalem which St. John saw in the midst of heaven, the throne upon which the Lamb reposes, and under which the souls of the righteous await their glorification. And thirdly, it is the altar of spiritual sacrifice, upon which the prayers and holy intentions and good works of the faithful are laid continually, and therefore it is also the figure of the Christian’s heart.

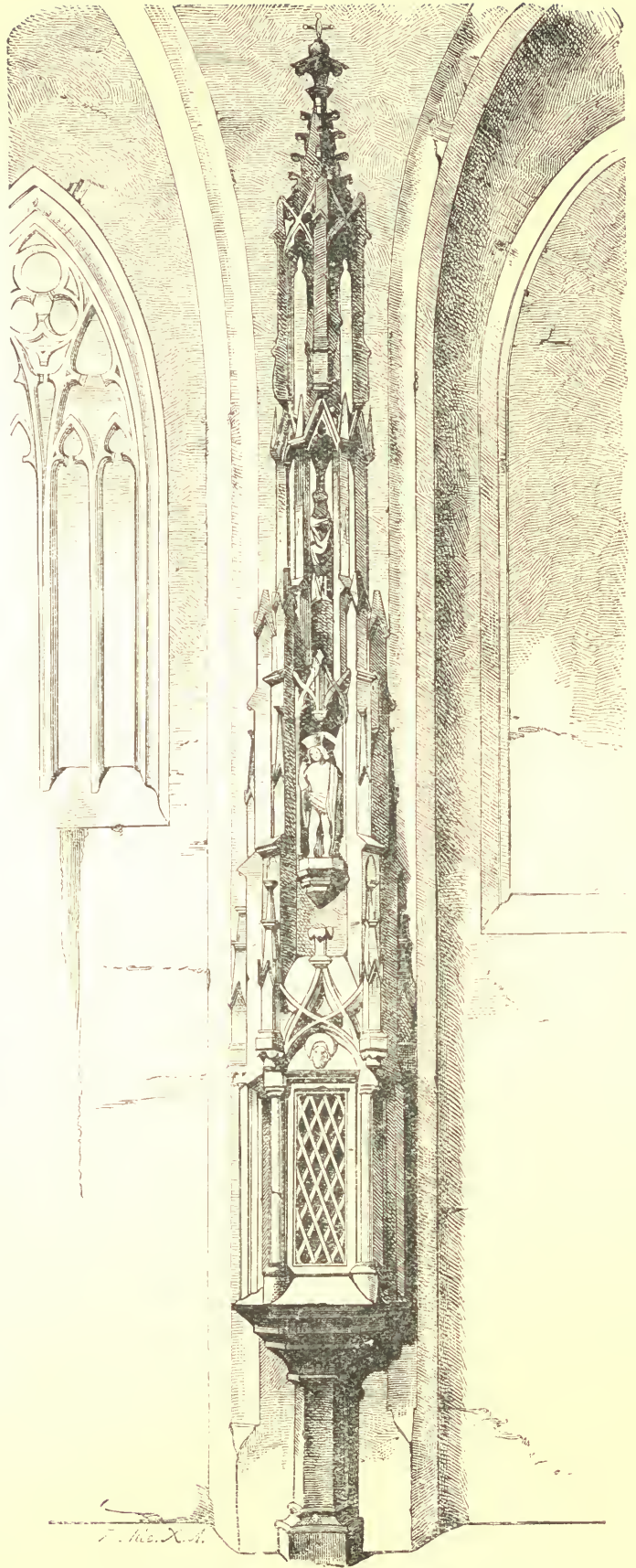
The altars at which the Apostles and their immediate disciples served were tables of wood. The altars in the Catacombs, as we have seen, were stone coffins, containing the bodies of Martyrs, the stone or marble lids of which served for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. In times when there was no persecution the altars which the Christians placed in their houses and churches usually consisted of a simple table, commonly made of wood,



CIBORIUM IN THE FORM OF A DOVE.



CIBORIUM ALTAR IN A CHURCH OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY AT MILAN.



TOWER TABERNACLE IN THE CATHEDRAL OF RATISBON

standing upon four legs, which in times of distress could easily be conveyed away. Nevertheless, the fourth successor of St. Peter, Pope Evaristus, A.D. 100-109, ordained strictly that thenceforward stone altars should exclusively be erected and consecrated. The altar of stone was meant to represent our Divine Lord, who is the Rock and the immovable Corner and Foundation-stone of the Church. The altar, as well as the church, was placed in the direction of the rising sun, and stood at the east end of the edifice. In shape, as at present, it was a rectangular oblong, hollow inside, in which the bones of holy Martyrs were enclosed with two small doors. And so, up to the present day, the relics of the Martyrs are placed under the altar-stone, because they, like their Divine Master, were offered in sacrifice. 'They, the triumphant victims,' says St. Ambrose, 'ought to be brought to the place where Christ, the great expiatory Sacrifice, is. He upon and over the altar, because He has suffered for all; they under the altar, because by His sufferings are they exalted.' In such a way should the Christian altar be an image of that which St. John describes in his Apocalypse (vi. 9): 'I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony they held.' The altar was generally dressed with fine white linen and adorned with gold and silver.

Upon such altars it was that, according to the language of ancient Christendom, 'the Mystery of the Faith' was consummated, and treated from the earliest times as a *holy Mystery*. It was withdrawn from the eyes of the uninitiated, and even the initiated amongst the believers looked upon it with a reverential and holy fear. On this account the altar stood in the choir, separated by a screen from the congregation, and under a ciborium.

The ciborium was a kind of silken roof, which rested on four thin little pillars and overhung the altar. From one pillar to another ran rods, from which depended curtains of silk, which concealed the entire altar as well as the person of the priest, who stood behind the altar facing the people, in front of the Holy Sacrifice, and it was only at certain parts of the service that they were drawn aside. Above, upon the ciborium, stood a crucifix, and around it were placed lights and flowers by way of ornament. Ciboriums were also made of wood, of marble, of gold, and of silver. Thus the Emperor Constantine had a golden ciborium made, which weighed five hundred pounds, with a gabled roof of silver weighing two thousand pounds. Right under the cross of the ciborium, beneath the sheltering roof, depending from two, three, or four little chains, hung the sacred vessel in which the all-holy Body of the Lord, the Bread of Life for the sick and dying, was reserved. This vessel, which gave the name of ciborium to the place, was at first made in the form of a dove, and later on in that of a tower. The dove was wrought in silver, and not unfrequently in gold, hollow inside and opening on the back. It took the place of the tabernacle of the present day.

The ciborium altars continued in use until the fourteenth century, as well as the dove or tower, of silver or gold. These 'doves' were also to be found in the centre of the church, hanging in front of the altar, in order that the faithful might pray in the presence of God.

In the fourteenth century the custom began of reserving the Blessed Sacrament no longer over the altar, but in so-called tabernacles near the altar. In small churches these were made of stone fixed into the wall, and shut in with an elegant iron grating. In cathedral churches they built a beautiful little tower, highly wrought in stone, and ornamented in many

places with most delicate work and costly jewels, and surmounted by a cross. In the lowest portion of the stem, usually reached by a staircase, the tabernacle was inserted, enclosed by a golden trellis, in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in costly vessels. Frequently the tabernacle rested on a delicate pillar, and over it rose the beautiful and elegant little tower. In the cathedrals of Ulm and Ratisbon, in the church of St. Laurence at Nuremberg, may be seen such memorials of the faith and piety of former years.

For one hundred and fifty years this description of tabernacle was in use. It was perceived at last that the altar and the All-Holy ought not to be separated; and Gibertus, Bishop of Verona (1525-1534), was the first who changed the custom, and ordered that in every parish church in his diocese, upon the high altar, should be placed a beautiful tabernacle of wood or other material, in which the Blessed Sacrament should be reserved. From that to the present time the ciborium altars, with their curtains and coverings, have fallen into disuse, and the tabernacles have been placed upon the altar under a canopy of silk or velvet, or even of gold and silver; or raised upon four pillars under a vaulted roof.

From those days until now are our tabernacles the resting-place for the Most Holy Sacrament. Here tarries Jesus, our All, under the form of bread; here it is that Love keeps Him a prisoner; and from hence He calls to all weary and heavy-laden ones, ‘Come ye here to Me, and I will give you rest.’

COMMUNION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

In his magnificent little book upon the Lord’s Prayer, which St. Cyprian wrote in the middle of the third century, a passage occurs in his explanation of the petition, ‘Give us this day our daily bread,’ from which it appears that it was the custom of the early Christians to communicate daily. He says: ‘Christ is the Bread of Life. We pray that this Bread may be given us daily, that we who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist as the food of salvation, may not by any mortal sin be shut out from the partaking of this heavenly Bread, may not be separated from the Body of Christ; for He Himself hath said, “*I am the living Bread which is come down from heaven.*” So now we pray that our daily Bread, which is Christ, may be given to us daily, in order that we who are in Christ, and who live in Him, may never fall away from His salvation nor depart from His Body.’

In his work upon the lapsed, viz. those unhappy Christians who in times of persecution, through fear, denied our Lord, the holy Bishop writes: ‘They have done violence to the Body and Blood of the Lord; yea, truly have they sinned far more against Him with their hands and mouths than even in denying Him;’ an unworthy Communion being held by the Saint as a greater offence against God than denying our Lord would be. From this passage we may see, as was the fact, that in primitive times it was the custom for the faithful to receive the Body of the Lord in their hands. It was also the custom to communicate little children, but only under the form of wine.

On the spot where St. Cyprian gave up his spirit under the sword of the executioner the Christians erected an altar, which they called *mensa Cypriani* (the table, or altar, of Cyprian), because there Cyprian was offered for Christ. Here the Most Holy Sacrifice was offered up, and, as is related by St. Augustine, very frequently a great number of the devout would

assemble before it to give thanks for the triumphal birthday of the Saint and Martyr, 'receiving' (these are his words) 'on that spot the Blood of Jesus Christ, in honour of the birthday of Cyprian, with great joy and delight, who himself, with such glowing love, shed his blood for the name of Jesus.'

At the time when St. Cyprian suffered martyrdom St. Cornelius governed the See of St. Peter. It was a time when the Church of Christ needed a strong hand to guide her through the storms which broke over her on all sides. Fearful wars and pestilences were followed by the still more fearful persecution raised against the Christians under the Emperor Valerian; and that which increased to its highest pitch the grief of the Holy Father was the confusion caused by the wickedness and obstinacy of the heretics within the fold of Jesus Christ. During the persecution forty-six priests were put to death. Whilst they lay in chains every kind of means was made use of by the faithful to visit them in their captivity, in order that the Holy Sacrifice might be celebrated in their prisons, and that they might receive in their hour of dread the support of the Blessed Eucharist. Now here there was no altar, and, in the absence of a table, the bread and wine were consecrated upon the open hands of the deacon.



COMMUNION OF THE CAPTIVES.

This same persecution reached as far as the land of Egypt. Already under the Emperor Decius had the blood of Martyrs flowed, and many fell away from fear of the executioner. Now these lapsed ones were, after long and severe penance, received again into the company of the faithful. Amongst others, an old man, Serapion by name, after leading a most blameless life, had been induced to offer incense to the false gods. He had bitterly repented his fall, but in vain had he entreated for

absolution and reconciliation. At length he fell ill, and was for three days without speech. On the fourth day, recovering the use of his senses for a moment, he cried to his young grandchild, his daughter's son, 'How long, my son, how long! Haste thee, I entreat, and bring me a priest, that my sin may be forgiven.' The child ran; but the priest was himself ill, and could not go. 'As,' writes the holy Bishop Dionysius, who himself relates this story, 'I had



OUR LORD DELIVERING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT TO ST. CLEMENT IN PRISON.

ordained that the dying, when they desired it greatly, should receive the Holy Eucharist, that they might depart in good hope of eternal life, so did the priest give to the child a little particle of the consecrated Host, desiring him to moisten it in water and to place it in the mouth of the sick man. Now when the child returned, Serapion as he entered the chamber, raising himself a little, said, "Dost thou come back, my child? The priest indeed cannot come; then do that quickly which has been commanded thee." The child dropped the Holy Eucharist into a little water and poured it slowly into the mouth of the old man, who having received it gave up the ghost.'

From this story, which happened in the third century, it is clear that in those days, as in these, the Most Holy Eucharist was reserved for the sick and carried to them; also that Holy Communion was even then administered under one form. St. Cornelius suffered martyrdom in the year 225, and was succeeded by St. Hippolytus. He

was a disciple of St. Irenæus, and is described by St. John Chrysostom as 'a faithful witness, a most holy teacher, a meek and most charming man.' Theodoret, the historian, calls him 'a spiritual fountain of the Church.' Amongst other spiritual writings which in part have been preserved to us, he wrote a little volume entitled *Whether a Christian should receive the Holy Communion daily*. In explanation of these words of Holy Scripture, '*Wisdom buildeth herself a*

house, she mixeth her wine and prepareth her table,' this holy preacher says: 'Wisdom (that is to say, Christ) hath sent His Apostles into the whole world, in order that by their godly preaching the nations might be brought to this understanding. . . . "Come, eat ye My Bread, and drink ye My Wine which I have mixed for you;" which, in truth, is no other than His Divine Flesh and His most adorable Blood, which He giveth us to eat and to drink.' In another place he writes upon the same words, '*Wisdom buildeth herself a house,*' &c.: 'Christ, the Wisdom of God the Father, hath built Himself a house of flesh out of the Virgin. He hath prepared His table; that is to say, His adorable and holy Flesh and Blood, which, upon that mystical and divine table, is daily prepared and offered.' St. Hippolytus suffered martyrdom A.D. 25.

In the year 303, under the pontificate of St. Marcellinus, the Emperor Diocletian issued an edict that the Church of Christ should be levelled to the ground throughout the entire empire; that all holy books should be sought for and destroyed; that all Christians, without distinction, should be tortured, should be considered incapable of public employment, and deprived of all rights of citizenship. In the whole empire, and more especially in Rome, the blood of the Martyrs began to flow in streams; 'The Christians to the lions!' was everywhere the cry.

In Rome the Catacombs were reopened. Holy Mass once more was offered up in the secret recesses of those consecrated chambers; and in the dead of night the faithful assembled as of yore, carrying away with them the consecrated Host, wrapped in fine linen and hidden in their bosoms, to their homes. Countless were the executions of the faithful. 'I myself,' says the historian Eusebius, 'saw on one day so many brought to the fire and the sword that the multitude of them was a subject of common remark.' Nothing infuriated the rage of the heathen so much as the joy with which the Christians praised God in the midst of their sufferings, and the haste with which the Martyrs hurried to their execution. Nothing was sweeter to the ears of those Martyrs than the writ of imprisonment which handed them over to death. Joy shone in their faces as their voices arose in songs of thanksgiving, which did not cease until their last breath was yielded into the hands of their Creator; and this joyous courage with which they defied death, this divine consolation in the midst of such frightful suffering, was the fruit of the Holy Eucharist. From prison to prison priests and deacons, carrying the divine food concealed in their mantles, visited the crowds of believers; by prayers and bribes they succeeded in penetrating those dark dungeons in order to strengthen the brethren for their final struggle. It was their most firm belief that Holy Communion was the seed of the resurrection and of everlasting life; so that death for them appeared but a holy and a sweet sleep, to be followed by a glorious awakening. Hence their fervent desire for their heavenly food; hence their daily Communion; hence the custom of taking the All-Holy to their home, into their prisons; hence the eagerness with which they besought their priests in every possible manner to bring to them in their chains the Bread of Life which would strengthen them for the combat. God Himself sometimes answered their desires, sending them this Food of Heaven, as is related in the life of St. Clement.

St. Clement was Bishop of Ancyra, under the Emperor Diocletian, and for the faith of Jesus Christ suffered a very long martyrdom. At length, being dragged to Rome, after fearful tortures he was thrown into the public prison. A crowd of heathen who witnessed his

sufferings, astonished by his fidelity and impressed by the words which by the power of the Holy Ghost he had addressed to them, followed him to the prison, seeking for baptism. The Saint, overjoyed at the conversion of so many souls, taught and baptised them at midnight. Suddenly was the prison illuminated by an extraordinary light, and in the same moment a man of most beautiful countenance, clothed in shining garments, approached the holy confessor Clement, gave him bread and a chalice, and then vanished. Whilst for astonishment all were beside themselves the Saint took the bread and the chalice, prayed, and distributed to all the newly-baptised the bread and the wine from the chalice. The following day they all went joyfully to death. St. Clement himself had yet much more to suffer, until for the love of Christ he was at last beheaded.

THE SAINTS OF THE DESERT.

In times when the Church had rest from persecution it was but natural that peace should enervate the minds of Christians. The Church's net gathered of every kind: 'from dissolute Corinth and the learned schools of Athens and Marseilles they flocked to the Church; Christianity penetrated into the wagon of the wandering Tartar and the hut of the wild Numidian; the obstinacy of the Buddhist, the fanaticism of the Persian fire-worshipper, the superstition ingrained in the hot blood of the proverbially passionate African, and the subtlety of the Alexandrian, were all to be subdued under the yoke of Christ. We must expect that amongst these many would, during a time of long peace, be exposed to fearful temptations. We must remember that they were living in the world, and that a world of heathenism' (F. Dalgairns's *Holy Communion*).

It is not therefore surprising to find, as time went on, men who fled from contact with the world in order to seek in solitude that life of communion with God which it is well-nigh impossible to find in the midst of their ordinary homes. To the Christian soul solitude has the strongest attraction. None have ever made great progress in perfection who have not more or less broken away from society in order to be alone with God. 'The next object, then,' says F. Dalgairns, 'upon which the eye rests after martyrdoms ceased is the record of the wonderful lives of those kind simple solitaries. It is not too much to say that the Christian spiritual life was formed by them: all its reality and dread of self-deceit, its hatred of pomposity and its simple naturalness, even in the highest supernatural states; its good humour and most tender charity for the faults and failings of others,—in a word, all that distinguishes the monk from the fakir comes to us from the Saints of the desert. Open the pages of Rodriguez, you will find that the rules for self-examination and for wrestling with temptation, which guide us even now, come from these dear solitaries. After all our books on meditation we might still go back with profit to the fervid ejaculations and the artless effusions of these simple hearts in the desert. Strange that it should ever have been thought that many of them seldom or never communicated. One reason, perhaps, for this mistake is the erroneous view conveyed by the word desert.'

This yearning for solitude, to break away from a world sunk in idolatry and wickedness, was first felt and carried out in the deserts of Egypt, whence it spread into Arabia and Syria; and those endless expanses of silent solitude became peopled with thousands of pious souls who had abandoned everything in order to be alone with God. Some dwelt in

cloisters, under the government of a superior or an abbot; some in caves or in rude huts which their own hands had constructed. Those who dwelt in community, as well as those who lived in solitude, supported themselves by labour, giving themselves up to prayer and recollection, to mortification and the exercise of all the Christian virtues. In the monasteries were found hospitals for the poor and the sick, and churches in which those who were priests amongst them distributed the Holy Sacraments. The holy solitary Apollo lived with five hundred monks near Hermopolis in Egypt, not far from the spot where Mary and Joseph dwelt with the Infant Jesus during their flight.

Many more lived in caves upon the surrounding mountains, and these came to the churches daily to receive Holy Communion, content and satisfied with this heavenly food until the following day. This case of daily Communion is, however, an exception to the general rule of the fathers of the desert, who communicated ordinarily on Saturday and Sunday only.

We find many instances of priests who visited the monasteries for the purpose of saying Holy Mass on Sundays; and the monks also were in the habit of visiting the nearest village or town in order to receive Holy Communion. Never did the road, however long, appear to them too far or too weary.

The holy Abbot Paphnutius, at ninety years of age, took a three hours' journey every Saturday and Sunday to the nearest church. St. Arsenius dwelt thirteen hours' jour-

ney from any church, and yet he visited it to communicate. To those recluses who never quitted their retreat a priest would bring the Holy Eucharist. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, the famous Church historian, who has preserved to us many beautiful and marvellous facts out of the lives of the holy anchorites and monks of the desert, relates of the holy solitary Mares, who



THEODORET OFFERING MASS IN THE CELL OF THE ANCHORITE MARES,
IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

for thirty-seven years lived in a little dilapidated hut not far from Cyrus, that, being on one occasion permitted to visit him in his cell, after a long discourse upon the things of God the holy old man opened the desire of his heart that he might once more assist at the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. At once Theodoret complied with the wish of the Saint, who was now ninety-nine years of age, and had led always a most pure and blameless life. He commanded the sacred vessels to be brought, and, as there was no table in that poor little hut, he offered the most Holy Sacrifice on the hands of his deacons. This favour so filled the heart of the venerable anchorite with joy that, in his own words, he believed heaven to have come down to him.

St. Auxentius, who lived upon a wild mountain in Chalcedon, his cell being built of wood in a cave, exhorted all solitaries who came to him for instruction to receive Holy Communion every Sunday. St. Basil relates that, in the case of the distance being too great for such constant visits to a church, the holy anchorites were permitted from time to time to take the Holy Eucharist back with them into their cells. It is related of St. Simon the Elder, an anchorite, that he took the resolution to eat no food during the long fast; and, having carried out his resolution, he was discovered by the priest Bassus lying on the ground, without giving a sign of life. At once Bassus moistened his lips with a sponge, and placed the Holy Eucharist in his mouth. Quickened by the heavenly food, he rose up; after which he received the Holy Communion daily, and could not live without it. When later on he ascended a high pillar, spending his life thereon in prayer, Bishop Domnus went to him, and by means of a ladder brought him the Holy Eucharist. Another anchorite, Simon the Younger, who also for many years lived on a pillar, received the Holy Eucharist by miracle, became a priest, and said Holy Mass upon his pillar. St. Onophrius lived for seventy years in the very depths of the desert, receiving Holy Communion every Sunday at the hands of an angel. The Saint informed Paphnutius that angels communicated other hermits. It would appear, therefore, that except in some very rare cases the fathers in the desert did communicate, in general once, or at most twice, a week, at a time when the faithful in the world received Holy Communion three or four times a week, or even every day.

ST. IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, MARTYR.

A.D. 107.

The Emperor Trajan being puffed up with pride, on account of his victories over the enemies of the empire, resolved to show his gratitude to the gods by a general persecution of the Christians. In the year A.D. 107, after having obtained a victory over the Parthians at Antioch, he caused this edict to be issued. Hardly had Ignatius learned the intention of the Emperor than he willingly permitted himself to be conducted before the magistrates. Now when Trajan saw the Saint he asked him, 'Who is this wicked spirit that so lightly disobeys our commands, yea, and persuadeth others to ruin themselves?' Ignatius replied, 'No one can call Theophorus an evil spirit, for the evil spirits have long been overcome by the servants of God. If, however, thou callest me evil on account of the evil spirits, because they must feel my power over them, then mayst thou be right. Since I contain within myself Christ, the supreme King of Heaven, I am able to annihilate all their assaults.' Then said

Trajan, 'And who is Theophorus?' Ignatius replied, 'He who carries Christ in his bosom.' Trajan said, 'Dost thou also carry Christ in thee—Him who was crucified by Pontius Pilate?' Ignatius replied, 'Yes; for it is written, "I will dwell in them and move in them."' Then said Trajan, 'We command that Ignatius, who says of himself that he carries within himself the Crucified, shall be bound by soldiers and led to the great city of Rome, there to be made food for the wild beasts, and to serve as a show for the people.' When the Saint heard this he cried aloud, 'I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou dost honour me with Thy most perfect love; that, with Thy Apostle Paul, I may be bound with bands of iron.' Then he gave himself up gladly into the hands of the soldiers to be bound in chains, and was taken to Rome.

St. Ignatius gave his life for Jesus in the year 107, about seven years after the death of the beloved Apostle St. John, whose disciple he had been. His bones were brought to Antioch, and kept there as a very precious treasure, until later on they were translated to Rome and placed in the church of St. Clement, where at the present time they rest under the altar of the ciborium.

ST. EUDOXIA, MARTYR.

A.D. 147.

The governor of Heliopolis, Diogenes by name, being desirous to take to himself to wife a Christian girl called Gelasia, she, in order to escape from his pursuit, took refuge in the convent of which Eudoxia was the superior. Diogenes on hearing of this sent fifty soldiers to enter the convent, and to bring Eudoxia into his presence. Now when the soldiers entered the convent by night, and inquired for Eudoxia, she presented herself before them fearlessly, but not before having entered the church and taken out of the sacred vessel from the altar a consecrated particle, which she secreted in her dress, and then delivered herself up as their prisoner. It was pitch dark, but behold there appeared to Eudoxia a youth clothed in white bearing a torch, who gave her light on the way, while all was dark to her captors.

At Heliopolis, before the judgment-seat of the governor, she made a good confession; and seeing no torment could induce her to deny her holy faith, and burn incense to the gods, the enraged governor commanded her to be hanged on a high gallows.

Now before the magistrates could put this command into execution they untied the girdle of the blessed Martyr, when behold from her bosom there fell to the ground the most holy particle of the Blessed Sacrament which she had taken from the altar. The magistrates, not knowing what it might be, picked it up and carried it to the governor. Hardly, however, had he stretched his wicked hand to take it, when lo! the Host changed into a flame of fire, which laid hold on the magistrate and also the left shoulder of the governor. He, crying out with pain, called upon his gods for help against the enchantress Eudoxia, but whilst he did so the flame scorched his entire body, and he fell down a burning mass. Upon seeing this miracle one of the soldiers and the whole family of Diogenes became converted to the faith. But Eudoxia's martyrdom was only deferred, for in the year 147 she was beheaded by order of Vincentius, who succeeded Diogenes, and who was equally with him an implacable foe of the Christians.

FACTS RELATED BY ST CYPRIAN, B.M.

A.D. 257.

In his work upon 'the lapsed' the holy Bishop Cyprian relates, as an eye-witness, many remarkable cases of the divine chastisement on those who in word or deed had denied their Lord, and with this sin upon their soul either received, or desired to receive, the Holy Communion.

The parents of a certain child had fled from the persecution, leaving it in the care of a servant-maid. This woman brought the little one, who could not even speak, before the magistrates of the city. Instead of giving her the meat offered to idols they gave her a piece of bread dipped in the blood of the sacrifice. When the mother returned home, not knowing what had happened, she took her child with her into the assembly of the faithful in order to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, intending her child to take part in the same.* The little girl, although unable to reveal what the servant had done, was seized with incomprehensible restlessness so soon as she was brought into the church. She wept aloud during the prayers and at the Holy Mass, threw herself from side to side, and appeared beside herself. When, at the conclusion of the holy service, the deacon who bore the consecrated chalice came to the child it turned from him, closed its lips, and refused to be communicated. Nevertheless the deacon let a few drops fall into its mouth: but the little one could not contain it. The child was guiltless, but what happened to her in the church led, as it appears, to the discovery of the wickedness of the servant.

A young girl, who had denied Christ, contrived to mix with the crowd to whom Cyprian was distributing the Most Holy Communion, and partook of it. The divine food was poison to her, she was seized with trembling, and fell down dead.

A woman who had lapsed in the same manner desired to open the coffer in which she kept the portion of the consecrated Bread which had been given her in the church. In times of persecution it was customary for the faithful to receive the Holy Sacrament in their hands, in order that they might take it to their houses, and, in the event of sudden capture, be so enabled to strengthen themselves. Now when that woman came to open the coffer a flame of fire issued forth, and drove her away in fear.

A man who had similarly lapsed presented himself and received the Holy Eucharist from a priest who did not know him; but the consecrated Host disappeared, and instead of the heavenly gift he held in his hand but a few ashes.

Now when the Emperor Valerian raised the eighth bloody persecution against the Christians, St. Cyprian wrote to Pope Cornelius: 'It is not only the weak but the strong who need defence, not only the dying but the living who need the Viaticum with which we send them to the fight, strengthening them for combat with the Body and Blood of Christ.' Whilst the holy shepherd thus prepared his flock and strengthened them to die for Christ, he himself was carried before the judgment-seat, and after a firm confession of the Faith was beheaded in the year 257.

ST. CORNELIUS AND SERAPION.

A.D. 264.

At the time when St. Cyprian suffered martyrdom, St. Cornelius occupied the Chair of St. Peter. The Church needed a man whose strong hand was capable of guiding her through the

* In the early days of Christianity little children were communicated under the form of wine.

storms which broke upon her on all sides, and such a one was Cornelius. War and pestilence afflicted the people over and above the fearful persecution which was carried on under the Emperor Valerian; but that which caused him the greatest amount of anxiety were the difficulties which the godless heathen occasioned in the Church through their wickedness and hard-heartedness. During this persecution forty-six priests were dragged before the judgment-seat. Whilst they lay in fetters the faithful sought by every means to visit them in their prison, in order that they might offer the Holy Sacrifice and receive at their hands the most Blessed Eucharist. They had no altar. For want of a table the priests consecrated the sacred elements upon the hands of the deacon.

ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM.

A.D. 389.

The Church reckons amongst the number of its Saints the father and the mother, as well as the sister and the brother, of this Saint. In the funeral oration which he delivered on the occasion of his sister Gorgiona's death he relates the following miracle concerning the Holy Eucharist. His sister suffered from a palsy which the physicians were unable to cure; and when she found that all natural means failed her she determined to have recourse to the Physician of mankind. One night, feeling a little alleviation of pain, she arose from her bed, and casting herself before the Blessed Sacrament, which was reserved upon an altar in her house,* she called upon Him who was there present; and following the example of the woman in the Gospel, who through the touch of the hem of Christ's garment was made whole, she then approached the altar, rested her head upon it, and cried that she would not leave it until she should be healed. Then, anointing her body with the ointment which she possessed, she wetted with her tears the particle of the Most Holy Sacrament which she had reserved, and, O miracle of goodness, she felt herself healed, and her heart relieved through the reward of her faith!

St. Gregory died in the year 389.

ST. BASIL AND THE CONVERTED JEW.

A.D. 379.

This Saint was the intimate friend of St. Gregory of Nazianzum. Now it happened one day that, as he was celebrating the Holy Mysteries in public, a Jew entered the Christian congregation, in order to witness the ceremonies and customs of the Christians in the divine service. He saw in the hands of St. Basil a child, whom he appeared to divide into four portions. Now this man accompanied the Christians when they approached in order to receive Holy Communion, and so he too partook of the Holy Eucharist, as it was then distributed, in both kinds. He reserved, however, a small particle, and took it home with him to show to his wife, to whom he related all that he had seen with his own eyes in the church. This man, enlightened by grace, believed at once the fearful and wondrous Mystery of the Christian worship, and came the following day to Basil with the request that he might receive baptism without delay. This the Saint granted, and baptised him and his whole household straightway. St. Basil died, lamented by all, even by the Jews, in the year 379.

* This was permitted in the early days of Christianity.

ST. GREGORY, BISHOP OF TOURS.

A.D. 595.

HOW THE JEWISH CHILD WAS PRESERVED UNHURT IN THE FIERY FURNACE AFTER RECEIVING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

St. Gregory of Tours, who died A.D. 595, relates in his book, *Of the Glories of the Martyrs*, a memorable story of the wonderful power of the Holy Eucharist, which has also been handed down to us by the well-known historian Evagrius. We will give the account in the words of Evagrius, and afterwards subjoin some additions of the holy Bishop :

‘In the days when Memnas occupied the episcopal chair of Constantinople a very extraordinary event took place. There was in that city an old custom, when a large number of the consecrated particles remained after Communion, of causing boys to come in from the schools in order to consume them. It happened once that amongst the other boys who presented themselves was the son of a glass manufacturer, who was a Jew. Now when his parents inquired of him the reason of his prolonged absence the child related what had happened, and how he, with the other boys, had been fed. The father, in a storm of fury, seized the boy, and cast him into the fiery furnace in which he was accustomed to fuse the glass. His mother sought her child, and finding him not, she went throughout the town weeping and mourning. At length on the third day, as she stood at the door of her husband’s workshop, weeping and tearing her flesh with grief, and calling on her son by name, it came to pass that the boy heard the voice of his mother, and answered her out of the furnace. Immediately she broke open the doors, went in, and there beheld her child standing in the midst of the fiery coals, unharmed. Now when he was questioned as to the manner by which he had remained without injury, he replied that a lady clothed in purple had very frequently appeared, bringing him water and quenching the coals around him ; also, when he was hungry, she brought him food. When Justinian the Emperor heard of this he placed both mother and son, after they had passed through the waters of baptism, under the care of the clergy ; but the father, who continued to refuse to believe in the mysteries of the Christian faith, he commanded, as being the murderer of his child, to be crucified in the suburb of Syca.’

St. Gregory writes thus : ‘The boy received the Holy Eucharist in the church of St. Mary, in which stands the image of the Blessed Virgin in a conspicuous place, upon which the eyes of the boy fell, and being drawn powerfully he entered the church. The image which he had seen in the church, with the child in her arms, was that of her who appeared to him in the midst of the fire.’ The Saint adds : ‘The boy received the bread, and therein the glorious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.’

THE DEVOTION OF ST. WENCESLAS, DUKE OF BOHEMIA, TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

A.D. 936.

When this Saint, who owed his religious training to the piety of his grandmother St. Ludmilla, his mother Drahomira being a heathen, came to the government of Bohemia, his overruling desire was to win his entire kingdom to the Catholic faith. It was striking to see

the young Duke, tired with the business of the day, passing whole nights in prayer for his people before the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Daily he was in the habit of hearing Holy Mass, kneeling on the stone flags of the church. It was a joy to him to see the priests at the altar, and to dress the altars himself, for his love for Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament was very great. On this account he would prepare the breads intended for the Hosts in Holy Communion with his own hands. The cornfield devoted to this purpose he not only tilled and sowed, but he also would be seen reaping the same, and, after grinding the corn into the finest flour, would himself prepare and bake the altar-breads, and humbly present them to the priest. Often in the midst of a winter's night he would rise from his couch in order to visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. His soul was so inflamed with the love of God that it imparted heat even to his very body.

On one occasion, in company with a servant, he went barefoot to the church in the depth of winter. Ice and snow covered the ground. Wenceslas stepped bravely forward, the servant following, trembling and bitterly complaining of the pain which his feet suffered from the deep snow. Then did the Saint advise him to tread in his footsteps; and behold a pleasant warmth imparted itself to the feet of the



ST. WENCESLAS OFFERING ALTAR-BREADS TO THE PRIEST.

servant, who now followed the Saint with gladness. It was his love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament which gave birth to those sweet graces of his character which rendered him so famous through the whole length and breadth of his dominions—his humility, his zeal for the honour of God, his inflexible justice, and his most tender compassion for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the forsaken.

As might be expected, such virtues gained him also many enemies, and his heathen mother united with his godless brother in a scheme for putting him out of the way. Now when a son was born to the brother of the Saint, he and his mother invited Wenceslas to pay them a visit. Without suspicion of their purpose the Saint accepted the invitation. But the following night, entering, according to his wont, into the church to pray before the altar, he was assailed by his murderers, and by his own brother pierced through with a lance on the 28th September 936.

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT DURING THE PLAGUE IN ROME.

A.D. 604.



Our illustration represents this great Saint leading the procession of clergy around the city of Rome, in order to propitiate the anger of God, on account of the destructive plague which at that time devastated the country; and being come to the tomb of Adrian, he perceived an angel sheathing his sword in token of an answer of peace.

How much St. Gregory the Great, like other Saints, was penetrated with devotion, reverence, and love for the Holy Eucharist, his famous Missal, known as the *Sacramentary*, will testify. In his sermons he speaks also of the Holy Eucharist, and illustrates, by quotations of wonderful facts, the inestimable worth and the power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In his thirty-seventh Homily he relates: 'Not long ago it happened that a man was taken prisoner and carried far away. Now after he had been a long time kept in prison without his wife knowing anything about it, she believed him to be dead,

and caused every week, on certain days, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to be offered for him. After a long time had elapsed the man returned home, and related to his astonished

wife that on certain days of the week the chains which bound him became loose. In this way at length he succeeded in making his escape. Now when his wife inquired on which days of the week this wonder took place, she discovered that the days on which his chains became loose were those upon which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for him.'

In his dialogues, or conferences, upon the miraculous lives of the Saints in Italy he relates in the fourth book the following marvellous occurrence: 'Agatho, Bishop of Palermo, journeyed from Sicily to Rome. Upon the way he fell into the danger of being shipwrecked. A frightful storm arose, which well-nigh sank the vessel in which he voyaged. No hope remained but in the merciful pity of Almighty God. Then all began to pray and to offer up petitions to Him that their lives might be spared. Whilst they were thus praying a certain sailor was occupied in steering a boat which was fastened to the ship, but which, through the violence of the storm, broke away from her holdfast and sank with the unfortunate man beneath the waves, and Bishop Agatho reckoned him as dead. In the mean time the ship in which the Bishop sailed arrived, after many dangers, at the island of Ostika. Here the Bishop offered the Sacrifice of the Mass for the unfortunate sailor; and, as soon as the ship was repaired, continued his voyage to Rome. When he landed he found the sailor, whom he believed to be dead, standing on the shore. Full of joy, he inquired how he had escaped the great dangers of so many days. The sailor then related how his little boat seemed continually on the point of capsizing, but always rose unharmed again to the top of the waves. Day and night he succeeded in struggling with the waves; but being weakened with hunger and thirst he must inevitably have gone to the bottom had not help been sent to him. "At length, suddenly," narrated he, "when I was quite prostrate, and as it were out of my mind, knowing not whether I was sleeping or waking, I saw a man standing before me, who offered me bread. Scarcely had I received it when my strength returned to me, and soon after I was picked up by a ship and brought hither." When the Bishop learned the day on which this event took place he discovered that it was the same on which he had offered Holy Mass for the unfortunate man on the island of Ostika.'

HOW THE HOLY EUCHARIST WAS CHANGED INTO GOLDEN EARS OF WHEAT FOR THE CONVERSION OF A HERETIC WHO WAS IN GOOD FAITH.

A.D. 612.

In the days of Abbot Theodore, Bishop of Seleucia, the pious monk John Moschus, journeying with Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, came to that city, where they were entertained by the good abbot, from whose lips they received the following wonderful fact, which John Moschus, in a little book dedicated to Sophronius, and entitled *Spiritual Meadows*, afterwards related thus:

'When we arrived at Seleucia, Abbot Theodore, Bishop of that town, paid us a visit. Now amongst other things he related to us the following, saying, "Under the episcopal rule of my predecessor, Dionysius of holy memory, a wonderful event occurred in this place. There dwelt in this city a God-fearing rich merchant, who nevertheless was attached to the Severian sect" (so called from the name of the heretical monk Severus, who denied the two natures.

the divine and the human, in Christ, admitting only the divine, whereby he also denied the Real Presence of the Body of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist). This merchant had a servant who held the Catholic faith. And when this man, after the custom of the country, had received the Holy Communion on Holy Thursday, he wrapt it in very fine linen and locked it away in his chest. Now it happened that soon after Easter he was sent to Constantinople in haste on pressing business, and left, forgetting the holy Host, which was in his chest, the key of which he gave to his master. When the merchant, therefore, opened the lid of the chest he found therein the fine linen, and in the self-same the holy Body of the Lord. Confounded at the sight, he stood in doubt as to what course he should pursue with regard to it; for he disdained to eat it, because it was the Communion of the Holy Catholic Church, whilst he himself was a Severian. At length he resolved to leave it as he had found it, hoping that his servant would return and consume the same before long. But in the mean time a whole year passed by. Holy Thursday came round again, and the servant had not returned. Then did the merchant resolve to burn the holy Host, in order that it might not be kept another year; and behold, when he opened the chest, he saw with astonishment that the consecrated species had sprung up into golden blades and ears of wheat. Upon seeing this unheard-of marvel, great dread seized the man; and at length, coming to himself, he took the holy Mystery, and together with his whole household began to sing the *Kyrie eleison*, after which he hurried to the Catholic church and presented himself before the Bishop Dionysius. Now this great miracle was not witnessed by one or two, but by many, even by the entire Christian community; for which reason many believed and took refuge in the bosom of the Catholic Church.'

ST. BERNARD AND DUKE WILLIAM OF AQUITAINE.

A.D. 1131.

William, Duke of Aquitaine, from his youth upwards was a daring godless man. He could not live without war, and in times of peace he would make his very vassals fight. His life was full of evil deeds and lawlessness, and to all other wickedness he added that of being the head of a party which refused to acknowledge the legitimate Pontiff.

To this man did Innocent II. send the servant of God, Bernard, in order to turn him from his sinful ways and bring him back into the bosom of the Church. St. Bernard therefore quitted his abbey of Clairvaux in the year 1131, and arrived safely on the territory of the Duke, taking up his abode at Chatellier in a monastery of his Order. From thence he wrote a letter to the Duke, with the request that he would come and visit him; and lo, to the astonishment of all, the powerful prince arrives, remains seven days with the holy man of God, returning to his castle with a promise to do penance for his sin.

But hardly had he returned when wicked counsellors drew him back to his godless life, so that his condition was now worse than before. The Saint was deeply troubled, and waited for a fitting time when he might once more attempt the conversion of this sinner. At length, believing that the moment had arrived, he betook himself, in company with the legate of the Pope, into the province of Aquitaine, and invited Duke William to a meeting. But the Duke, although shaken by the words of the Saint, refused to be reconciled with the Bishop whom

the Pope had sent. Then did the holy man have recourse to prayer, resolving that God alone should work in this matter. On the day, therefore, when the next conference was arranged to take place the Saint offered Holy Mass, Duke William also being present. In the midst of the Holy Sacrifice St. Bernard suddenly stopped, and laying the Host upon the paten, with glowing countenance and flashing eyes he descended the steps of the altar, and approaching the Prince, said, 'We have wasted prayers enough, and thou hast despised us; many of God's servants have united their petitions with ours, and all in vain, for thee. Now cometh the Son of the Virgin, Him whom thou persecutest, the Master and Lord of the Church, the Judge before whose name every knee in heaven, or earth, or in hell, is bowed. Into His hands, into the hands of the Avenger of all evil, will that soul fall which now animates thee! Wilt thou despise Him also?'

The Saint was silent. Silence reigned over the praying throng around. Tears and consternation were visible on every cheek. With anxiety awaited every one the conclusion to so unheard-of a proceeding, which appeared like a sudden revelation of divine power. The terrified prince was unable to utter a single word; his knees shook; he sank upon the ground; and when his guards uplifted him he fell down again with a frightful cry.

Then did the Saint touch him, and bade him by signs to arise, and in solemn tones commanded him thus: 'Go reconcile thyself with the Bishop of Poitiers, whom thou hast banished from his see; give him the kiss of peace: conduct him thyself into the church; and show him as much honour as thou hast done him dishonour. Recall those back to Catholic unity whom discord has separated from Holy Church, and be obedient to Pope Innocent, whom God has raised to the See of St. Peter.'

The Duke, full of the strength of the Holy Ghost, did all that was commanded of him, and from that moment became a changed man. Conscience asserted itself in his heart, and with tears and repentance he abandoned his unholy life, determined to offer satisfaction by a holy death. He renounced all his possessions, and when he was but thirty-eight years old he went into solitude, spending the remainder of his life in hard penance and in all the works of Christian virtue.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT DELIVERS A CITY OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

A.D. 1242.

In the year 1242 the victorious Tartar hordes under Beta, their leader, overran Silesia, filling the land with murder and rapine as far as the boundaries of Moravia. Then did Wenceslas I., King of Bohemia, confer upon the noble Jaroslas of Sternberg the charge of protecting the Moravian Margravate; and he, with eight thousand men from Bohemia, to whom were added four thousand of the Moravian nobility, occupied at once the city of Olmütz, resolving to hold this fortified city, and to defend it to the last extremity. Soon indeed appeared the vanguard of the enemy; soon did the smoke of burning villages, rising up around them, speak of the approach of the fearful Tartar hosts. On the third day hill and plain swarmed with the dark masses of the invader. Nearer and nearer came the Tartars towards the walls of the city, until at length they were surrounded; but on account of the deep trenches they did not at once commence the attack, but fell upon the neighbouring

monastery of Gradie, burned it, and massacred all within its walls, even to the last man; the heads of the murdered men were tied to their horses' tails, and in this manner the invaders presented themselves at the gates of the city. This fearful sight, however, did not discourage the besieged; rather it roused them to fresh ardour to be revenged for the wicked deed. Nevertheless Jaroslas, by his wisdom, restrained them, awaiting a fitting time in which to make an onslaught upon the enemy. This delay, which was mistaken by the foe for cowardice, caused a general relaxation in their vigilance, and they began by degrees to separate, in order to forage for means of subsistence. This was taken note of by Jaroslas, and he believed the moment to have arrived in which he might safely attack the invader.

Now this undertaking being full of danger, he made it his first duty to assure himself of



THE BLESSED SACRAMENT BORNE BY A PRIEST ON HORSEBACK IN A VICTORIOUS ASSAULT ON THE TARTARS.

divine help. It was the feast of St. John Baptist when Jaroslas, at the head of his soldiers, entered the church of Corpus Christi, and there, after making humble confession of his sins, received the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. His example was followed by his captains, and afterwards by the soldiers. After all had thus been fortified by the Bread of the strong, Jaroslas rose and spoke a few encouraging words to them, reminding every one of the duty he owed to the fatherland and to the Holy Catholic Church, and commanding them to hold themselves in readiness for the following night.

After midnight the signal of departure was given, and a troop of chosen knights, with the brave Jaroslas at their head, put themselves in motion. Then suddenly Jaroslas halted,

commanding his followers to do the same, and, throwing himself from his horse, fell on his knees, casting his sword on the ground, and with loud voice and humbly bowed head he made a vow to the great Mother of God to build a church to her honour if she, through her all-availing intercession, should obtain for them the victory. Then all with one accord lifted up their voices, saying ‘Ave Maria;’ and mounting their horses they rode out of the fortress.

The number was indeed small; it might have been said that twenty of the foe would have sufficed to rout them. Nevertheless in the name of the Lord they passed on, full of courage and confidence. But not merely in the name of the Lord did that little band go forth to the battle: *the Lord Himself was with them.* After the Communion which the soldiers had received the previous day five consecrated particles remained over and above; these were deposited and guarded in the tabernacle. Now Jaroslas bethought himself in the same moment of the Ark of the Covenant of the Old Testament, which, by command of God, the Israelites carried into the battle. The thought of a similar but nobler pledge of victory which he might carry into the battle pressed upon him with such vehemence that his resolution was taken. He made arrangements that the consecrated Hosts should be enclosed in a costly ciborium, and borne by a priest on horseback into the battle. So it happened that the Saviour was present, not merely by His benediction, but still more in His own Person: He accompanied the warriors, and led them to victory.

The fight began. Assured of victory, the men whom Jaroslas led fell courageously upon the outposts of the Tartars, and, after despatching them in silence, proceeded to slay the outer watch of the camp, who lay in profound repose; and before the enemy were aware of the presence of their opponents, they made bloody havoc amongst them. Alarmed by the noise Beta, the leader of the Tartars, seized his sword, endeavouring to draw his men into line of battle. In vain; a hill covered with the dead bodies of his men obstructed his way. Then he perceived Jaroslas; and with sudden aim he fell upon him in deadly strife. But with a powerful arm Jaroslas brandished his sword, and under that stroke Beta fell, never to rise again.

At length Jaroslas perceived the object of his sally to be attained. His soldiers were tired, and three hundred were wounded or dead; therefore with the rest he retired into the town. Terrified at the enormous multitude of the dead, and discouraged by the fall of their leader, the Tartars took counsel to remain there no longer, but fled into Hungary, where, under the command of Battus, these hordes laid waste the country; but Olmütz and the land of Moravia were saved. It is worthy of remark that the edge of each of those five consecrated particles of which we have spoken, on their return to the city, exhibited a clear shining circle of a roseate colour, which was believed to be a sign that Christ had stood by the side of the warriors who had thus shown their faith in Him, and had Himself discomfited the enemy who trampled upon His name.

ST. CLARE

DELIVERS THE CITY OF ASSISI BY THE POWER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

A.D. 1253.

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was the crowning grace of the glorious foundress of the Second Order of St. Francis. Before the altar where Jesus lay enthroned was the spot



ST. CLARE WITH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT CONFOUNDING THE INFIDEL TROOPS.

where she loved best to tarry, and there, prostrate upon the ground, she passed whole hours in unbroken prayer to God. Prayer was her spiritual comfort and strength. Whilst her Sisters took their rest St. Clare watched, was always the first to rise to ring the bell in choir and to light the candles. Even when sick in bed she spun with her own hands fine linen for corporals and for the service of the altar, which she distributed through all the churches of Assisi and the surrounding mountainous districts, at that time devastated by the wild hordes of the Saracens. The impious Emperor Frederick II., who, on account of his wickedness, had fallen under the ban of the Church, had sent an army of infidels into the valley of Spoleto, because it was the patrimony of the Holy See; and there he left a colony of 20,000 of these enemies of the Church in a place still called after them *Noura des Moros*.^{*} These banditti came in great numbers to plunder Assisi, and as St. Damian's convent stood with-

out the walls of the city they assaulted it first. In their terror the nuns flew at once to the sick-

^{*} Alban Butler.

bed of their mother, who, forgetting her weakness, exclaimed, 'Fear not, my dearest children; trust in Jesus Christ, and He will save you.' Then she commanded that they should lead her to the gate of the convent, as she would place in their way an insurmountable barrier to the rage of the infidels. In vain did they represent the danger and her own weakness; she heeded them not, but, accompanied by two of her Sisters, she took the Most Blessed Sacrament in her hand as her mighty shield and impenetrable defence. She prostrated herself before her God, and exclaimed, 'O Divine Jesus, deign to cast an eye of pity on Thy humble handmaid. Is it possible that those whom Thou hast brought up in Thy holy fear and love should fall a prey to the heathen? Give not to the wild beasts the souls of Thy servants who have known Thy name, but save them whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Precious Blood.' As she thus prayed behold a sweet voice from the Most Holy Sacrament replied, 'Yes, I will protect you without ceasing.' At these words, full of renewed trust, she continued, 'O Lord, take under Thy protection this city, which has maintained us out of love for Thee.' And the Lord replied, 'This city will suffer many things, yet will it be saved through My protection and your prayers.' Then did she arise up in the strength of the Holy Ghost, and appearing on the walls with the monstrance in her hands, such a glorious light streamed from the Blessed Sacrament that, seized by a sudden terror, the assailants fled in precipitation, and the convent was saved. But the marvel did not stop here. Hardly had the inhabitants of the valley of Spoleto recovered from the shock of this invasion when Vitalis Aversa, a cruel proud man, and a general of the same wicked Emperor, laid siege to Assisi for many days. St. Clare called her nuns together, and, representing to them the duty they owed to render all assistance to a city from which they had received all their corporal necessities, she bade them cover their heads with ashes, and prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament to pour forth their supplications for the deliverance of the city in its extremity. They continued for a day and a night in prayer to God, till, powerful succours arriving, the assailants silently raised the siege and retired without noise, their general soon after being slain.

MIRACLE IN ST. SAVIOUR'S CHAPEL AT RATISBON.

A.D. 1255.

On Maundy Thursday, March 25, 1255, it happened that a priest was carrying the Blessed Sacrament to a sick person through a street in Ratisbon, across which a little stream flowed. A narrow plank served for a bridge, upon which, when the priest had set foot, he unfortunately slipped, and the Hosts in the ciborium which he carried were spilled, falling into a puddle of dirty water. Now it was with great trouble that the holy Hosts were once more collected together; and believing themselves to be guilty of great disrespect to the honour of our Lord, on the self-same day did the people resolve to build a chapel on the spot which the Body of the Lord had touched. The building was at once begun, and constructed provisionally of wood. Before Easter-day broke the chapel was ready. The holy Hosts were with all due devotion placed therein; and on the 8th September 1255 it was consecrated by Bishop Albert to the honour of the Most Holy Redeemer (*in honorem Sancti Salvatoris*), by which it received the name of St. Saviour's Chapel.

Without delay did the people crowd to offer fealty to the Divine Redeemer, and to make supplication to Him; and two years later on, in 1257, was this circumstance the occasion of a

wonderful event, which still further fortified the faith of the people.

A priest who was offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in this chapel, during the consecration and elevation of the chalice, permitted himself to doubt the Real Presence of the Blood of Christ. At the same moment the image of the Crucified, which stood before him on the altar, stretched out His arm and took the chalice out of his hand. In fear he started back, repented of his doubt, and the hand of the Crucified gave him back the chalice.

From this time the fame of the place spread so far and so rapidly, and the offerings were so rich, that in the year 1260 it was determined by the magistrates to build a stone church by the side of the wooden chapel. In the year 1267 both chapel and church were made over as a gift to the Order of Augustinians, in whose hands it remained until the year 1803. In the year 1838 the church, on account of decay, was pulled down, and the chapel alone was



MIRACLE OF THE CRUCIFIX AND CHALICE AT RATISBON.

left standing. When this, at length, threatened to fall it was, in the year 1855, worthily restored, and consecrated by Bishop Valentine on the 8th September. There is not an hour in the day when this church is not visited by the devout.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

A.D. 1260.

For the first ten centuries of the Church no Christian, no heretic even, had dared to deny the Real Presence in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, or even to cast a shadow of a doubt upon it. From the days of its institution by our Blessed Lord, all the Apostles and their disciples, all the holy Fathers of the Church, Popes, Bishops, and priests,—in short, all Catholic Christians of every age, condition, and generation, had firmly and faithfully held that in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the priest, in the name and through the almighty words of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, changes the bread into the true Body and the wine into the true Blood of our Lord and Saviour, and offers His very Body and Blood in sacrifice to the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. It was not until the eleventh century that Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers in France, obtained an unhappy celebrity by denying this inexplicable mystery. He was at once refuted on all sides by the most learned Churchmen; amongst whom Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Adelmann, priest of the cathedral of Liège, afterwards Bishop of Brescia, wrote letters to the unhappy heretic. Councils also were held—first in Paris in the year 1050, afterwards in Rome by Pope Nicholas II. in the year 1059, and later on, in 1078, by Pope Gregory III,—in which the teaching of Berengarius was refuted, and the true doctrine of Transubstantiation was clearly defined. Berengarius, on finding his errors finally condemned, submitted himself to the definition of the doctrine, and spent the last years of his life in penance.

But God, who permits evil only that His greater glory may be manifested, allowed this seed to take root to a certain extent, that by means of weakness He might show forth His strength; and for this purpose He instituted the most glorious feast of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ through the instrumentality of a feeble woman, in order to correct this spirit of unbelief, and to be a witness to the end of time to the presence of our Lord, in His divine humanity, in the midst of His Church.

ST. JULIANA OF CORNILLON.

A.D. 1260.

Juliana was born at Retine, a village about two leagues distant from Liège. Being left an orphan at the age of five years, she was placed with the Cistercian nuns of Cornillon, where she was brought up. Here was early developed her religious vocation, and she desired whilst yet a child to occupy herself with the arduous duties of the religious life. The prioress, seeing this, gave her in charge to a holy nun named Sapientia, whose duty it was, not only to educate, but also to watch over her vocation very narrowly. In a short time Juliana had learned all the Psalms by heart, showing herself besides most apt in everything that concerned the duties of religion, and growing daily in the fear of God and in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. She had no taste whatever for childish recreations, but sought solitude and recollection. In memory of the crucified life of our Lord she desired to be occupied in the most menial work, and begged to be allowed to herd the cattle and to clean the stables. On receiving permission she undertook this laborious work, which she fulfilled with great

patience and assiduity until her fourteenth year. Her one design was so to fulfil the duties of a religious that she might be found worthy to be admitted into the cloister. This happiness was conferred upon her, notwithstanding her extreme youth, in the year 1207, at the age of fourteen.

From this moment her heart was entirely given to God. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament grew with her growth. On the days when she communicated she withdrew from all intercourse with others, and spent her whole time in prayer and meditation. At the elevation she would fall prostrate, while her whole appearance indicated the interior love of her heart; and although she strove the utmost to conceal the emotion she felt, it was impossible for others not to perceive it.

She had scarcely reached her sixteenth year, when her heavenly Bridegroom began to favour her with visions into the meaning of which she could not penetrate.

Being one day engaged in contemplation, she saw in spirit a vision of the moon at its full, a dark spot in which disfigured the clear shining thereof. At first Juliana gave no heed to this appearance; but upon its reiteration she became uneasy, and acquainted Sister Sapientia with her secret. Sapientia, now Superior of the convent, took into counsel several pious and learned persons, who, being unable to give any explanation of it, treated the apparition as a simple dream. Juliana in her humility submitted her judgment, and believed as she was instructed; she endeavoured to forget it, but in vain. Wherever she went, and whatever she did, the same vision presented itself to her eyes. She had therefore recourse to prayer, beseeching God to remove these distracting thoughts from her mind; but her prayer was not granted. The time was not yet come when it should please God to give her any explanation of the mystery.

From this time, and by the wise foresight of her holy Superior, Juliana had means permitted her of more complete abstraction from the external world. An oratory was fitted up, in which she spent her time in solitude and prayer, scarcely allowing herself time for the sustenance of the body. At length the Blessed Sacrament became her principal bodily as well as spiritual aliment, and she would retire into her closet after receiving the divine food, remaining there for eight days in the strictest seclusion, silence, and solitude. The Sisters, fearing for her health, besought her most affectionately to quit this lonely life; but, with the greatest sweetness and humility, she entreated that, on the contrary, she might be permitted to remain in her solitude for a month without fearing for her health, since food was distasteful to her, and communion with God had become the only delight of her soul. Nevertheless in the midst of her meditations the thought of the vision she had seen caused her no little uneasiness, and she ceased not with great earnestness to pray for the revelation of the mystery.

At length, after many days of excessive prayer, she fell asleep through exhaustion, and during this slumber her prayer was granted. In the depth of her soul a heavenly voice made itself understood, and she heard the following words: 'That which disturbs thee is that a feast is wanting to My Church militant, which I desire to establish. It is the feast of the Most High and Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. At present the celebration of this Mystery is only observed on Maundy Thursday; but on that day My sufferings and death are the principal objects of consideration; therefore I desire another day to be set apart in which it shall be celebrated by the whole of Christendom and this for three reasons:

‘I. That the faith in the divine mystery, which is beginning to be attacked, and will in future times be still further menaced, may be more confirmed and reassured.

‘II. That the faithful who believe and seek the truth may be fully taught and convinced, and enabled to draw from this well of life the strength necessary to carry them on in the way of virtue.

‘III. That reparation may be made for the irreverence and impiety shown towards the Divine Majesty in the Blessed Sacrament, by a sincere and profound adoration of the same. In fine, that thou, Juliana, art chosen to give the opportunity for the establishment of this feast.’

In spite of the joy with which this announcement inspired the heart of the pious girl, her humility drew her to entreat God that He would not place so great an undertaking into her hands. For twenty years her secret remained with herself, until at last the moment arrived when she felt she could no longer withstand the inspiration of God, and she resolved therefore to do His bidding.

After consulting with other discreet and holy women whom God inspired with great confidence in her words, Juliana, who had become prioress of her convent, resolved to intrust the command she had received into the hands of a canon of St. Martin’s, John of Lausanne,

afterwards prior, a very holy man, and one much sought after for his advice on difficult questions. Him she engaged to discuss the subject with other men of God, which he undertook to do with great readiness: consulting Hugh of St. Cher, Provincial of the Dominicans, James Pantaleon, Archdeacon of Liège, the Bishop of Cambrai, and other learned persons.

After all had been well weighed, it was decided that the design was not contrary to the mind of the Church, and that the feast might be introduced as a thanksgiving to Almighty God for the institution of this ineffable mystery, and reawaken in Christendom the spirit of devotion, which day by day was fading away.

After much contradiction from spiritual as well as worldly persons, Juliana had at length the happiness of meeting with sympathy in the person of Robert, Bishop of Liège. This



VISION OF ST. JULIANA.

man of God visited her often, and, perceiving her to be guided by heavenly wisdom to a knowledge of the manifest will of God on the subject, he at length determined to introduce the feast into his own diocese. In the year 1246 he issued a command that every year, on the fourth day (Thursday) after the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, the feast of Corpus Christi should be celebrated in all the churches within the diocese of Liège.

After his death Hugh, the former Provincial of the Dominicans, who was already acquainted with the visions of Juliana, and had been created a cardinal and legate at Liège, found there the feast as it had been established by Robert; and, conceiving a great devotion for it, he not only preached in its favour, but commanded the celebration thereof in the entire district of his legation. The same course was continued by his successor, Peter Capoch.

When these legates were removed, there seemed a danger of the feast being forgotten. But God had not so ordained. In the year 1261 James Pantaleon, Archdeacon of Liège, one of the first whose voice had decided in favour of the heavenly vision, was raised to the pontifical throne under the name of Urban IV. Thus the new Pope was happy, a few years later, in being able by a Bull to establish the feast of Corpus Christi all over the world, to the entire fulfilment of the prediction made by our Lord to Juliana. His successor, Clement IV., renewed the Bull of Pope Urban; but it was not until the days of Pope John XXII. that the feast began to be celebrated with processions, a solemn octave being added to it.

Thus from century to century has this festival been more and more highly exalted, until it is now become one of the most touching, the most lovely, and the most glorious feasts that adorn the Holy Catholic Church.

Although Juliana has not been formally canonised, she has received the title of Saint in Bulls of Popes Innocent XII. and Benedict XIII. A Mass for her feast is inserted in many Missals, and the present Pope has granted a plenary indulgence on her feast to the Cistercians of the congregation of La Trappe.

THE MIRACLE OF BOLSENA.

A.D. 1264.

In the year 1264 a pious priest journeyed towards Rome in order to make inquiry at the source of all true doctrine, the Viceregent of our Lord upon earth, concerning certain doubts which oppressed him. His belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ under the form of wine suffered great temptation. In vain had he sought to fathom this mystery; in vain had he prayed that our Lord would mercifully remove from him this terrible doubt. Now when he came on his journey to the little town of Bolsena, which lies at the foot of a hill not far from Orvieto, on the way to Rome, he prepared to say Mass in the church of St. Christina. At this moment it pleased Almighty God to hearken to his prayer, and to dispel his doubts. At the words of consecration, when the mysterious change of the substance took place, suddenly the Sacred Blood in the chalice began to be agitated, and trickled over the rim upon the corporal, where it took the appearance of blood-red drops. The priest, full of fear, endeavoured to conceal the fallen drops by folding the corporal together; but the drops of blood saturated the folds, and four of them fell upon the marble pavement upon which the

altar stood, exhibiting all the appearance of fresh blood. Now it was no longer possible for the priest to hide the thing, and learning that Pope Urban IV. was at that moment in the neighbourhood of Orvieto he hurried thither, and, full of penitence, related to him all, and received from him absolution. The Pope then commanded the blood-besprinkled corporal to be brought to him, and when he was convinced of the truth of the miracle he had it carried with great solemnity and placed in the cathedral. The marble stones upon which the drops of blood had fallen were kept in the church of St. Christina at Bolsena with great reverence, where to this day they are venerated by the people. In the year 1290, Pope Nicolas IV. laid the foundation-stone of a church in which the miraculous corporal was exposed for veneration. This church for beauty and size bears comparison with any in the world.

The miracle of Bolsena was, next to the revelation of St. Juliana, the cause of all doubt being removed from the mind of Pope Urban IV. concerning the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi. The painting in which Raphael has handed down this miracle to posterity may be seen to this day in the Vatican.

ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN AND ST. BONAVENTURA.

THE OFFICE AND MASS OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

A.D. 1264.

It is related of St. Bonaventura that, being at his birth on the point of death, St. Francis of Assisi by his prayers procured his recovery and restoration to life. Now when the Saint shortly before his death came to visit the parents of the child, perceiving the future eminence and sanctity of the infant whose life he had preserved, and how much the Church would rejoice in his virtues and in his learning, he exclaimed by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, ‘*O buona ventura!*’—O happy occurrence! from which the name arose by which he was afterwards known. From his infancy he was dedicated to God, and followed without wavering the high vocation to which he was called, entering the Order of St. Francis at an early age, and seeking to unite himself with God by constant recollection and prayer.

At one time, however, it pleased our Lord to permit him to suffer a great trial. An extraordinary anxiety took possession of his soul, and kept him back from the holy table. The presence of the Saviour in the Most Holy Sacrament filled him with fear. He was consumed with longing to receive Him in the Holy Communion, but the consciousness of unworthiness held him back. Thus was he languishing betwixt love and fear when the Lord Himself, moved by pity, put an end to his sufferings. As he was one day assisting at Holy Mass, being absorbed in the consideration of the sufferings of Christ, a portion of the consecrated Host which was in the hands of the priest placed itself upon his lips. Immediately he was filled with inexpressible joy, his anxiety was dispelled, confidence and joy took possession of his soul; and from that time he received the Holy Communion more frequently, and every Communion became a source of fresh consolation to him.

The memorable year 1264 approached. In this year it was that the festival of Corpus Christi was instituted by Pope Urban IV. Now for this feast the Holy Father desired a Mass

and an Office to be written. St. Bonaventura had been, on account of his virtue and learning, created Superior-General of the Order of the Franciscans. One of his dearest friends, St. Thomas of Aquin, as learned and as holy as himself, was the Superior-General of the Dominicans. Both of these Saints were in the Church as stars in the sky, and it was to these men that the Pope gave the commission to write a Mass and an Office for the feast of Corpus Christi. The Pope reserved to himself the right of deciding which of the writings of these two great men should be the worthier to be retained. Now on the appointed day both Saints, each with his manuscript under his arm, presented themselves before the Vicar



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS READING THE OFFICE FOR CORPUS CHRISTI BEFORE URBAN IV.

of Christ. St. Thomas was the first to read, kneeling, what he had written. Both the Pope and St. Bonaventura listened with tears of emotion to the reading of the Saint; whilst St. Bonaventura, turning aside, tore up his manuscript into small pieces, and when his turn came he confessed what he had done, and that he was no longer in possession of it. He considered, he said, that the work of St. Thomas alone was worthy to be used at the most holy feast, and a deep sense of humility led him to think it unnecessary to take account of his own.

And now for centuries in every Catholic church, on the feast of Corpus Christi, is heard that heavenly hymn which was penned by the hand of St. Thomas of Aquin.

ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN

(Continued).

St. Thomas, among the doctors of the Church, is a star of the first magnitude. None of his distinguished works was begun without prayer; always, and before all things, he looked to God for assistance, and he was thereby so illuminated of God that no one may materially differ from what he has written (so says one of his biographers) without danger of soiling the purity of his faith.

From his earliest youth he was daily to be found at the steps of the altar praying for guidance and light upon his studies. He used to say that he learned far less from books than he did at the foot of the Cross. Pure in heart, obedient, humble as a child, and full of a heavenly peace which shone in his very face, at twenty-five years of age he received priest's Orders. In preparation for this great change he redoubled his devotions. Night after night he spent before the tabernacle in communion with God and the holy Angels; and when he offered up his first Mass it was with tears of emotion, whilst his brow was illumined with a celestial glow.

One day St. Bonaventura visited our Saint, and with all simplicity and humility inquired of him, saying, 'Brother, tell me what book is it from whence thou drawest those beautiful things wherewith thou dost astonish the whole world?' 'That is the book,' replied Thomas, pointing to the crucifix as he spoke.

There was at this time a great dispute concerning the All-Holy Sacrament, which had reached even the city where he dwelt. Weary with the strife, all the doctors came thither in order that the young Thomas should determine the matter, for the fame of his clear-sightedness and wisdom was spread far and wide. After all the writings containing these various



conflicting opinions had been delivered into his hands. St. Thomas as usual recollected himself, entered into deep contemplation, prayed after his ordinary custom, and then wrote what the Holy Ghost had breathed into his soul. Nevertheless he would not place the fruit of his labour and his prayers before the learned doctors without first asking counsel of Him of whom he had written and whose help he had implored.

Approaching the altar, he laid what he had written before the tabernacle of the Lord and uttered the following prayer:

‘O Lord Jesus, who in this marvellous Sacrament art truly present, all of whose works are miracles, incomprehensible miracles, I implore Thee most humbly to certify to me whether this that I have written of Thee agreeth with the truth. Give me the grace to teach it to my brethren, that they may be convinced thereupon; and should there be in this writing aught against the true Catholic faith, I beseech Thee to take from me the possibility of pronouncing it.’

The Saint had been followed by many religious of his Order. Now these attest how Jesus Christ appeared to him, and, pointing to the books he had written, said in accents full of love, ‘Thou, My son, hast spoken worthily of the Sacrament of My Body.’ But Thomas prolonged his prayer, whilst he was seen to be lifted up into the air, through divine contemplation. At length, being come out of his ecstasy, he returned quietly into his cell. But the learned doctors accepted his teaching without reservation; and the faith in the Real Presence, under the form of bread and wine, had won a fresh foundation to withstand the assaults of unbelief.

Soon after this it was proposed to institute the great feast of Corpus Christi; and it fell to St. Thomas to write the Offices of the feast, of which the words of the *Pange Lingua* will alone immortalise the name of St. Thomas Aquinas. When he was about concluding the most famous of his works, called the *Summa*, he redoubled his austerities and his prayers, in order to obtain of Heaven the grace that no error should be found in his writing. When at Naples, where he passed the last years of his life, he was one day kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of St. Nicholas, and in a state of ecstasy being raised many feet in the air he heard from the lips of the Crucified, ‘Well hast thou written of Me, Thomas; what reward desirest thou of Me?’ Thomas replied, ‘None other than Thyself, O Lord.’

At the moment when he was about to receive the Holy Viaticum he cried out, ‘I receive Thee, Thou who art the price of the redemption of my soul. For love of Thee I have studied, watched, worked; Thee have I preached and taught. I have never willingly said aught against the Faith; but if my ignorance hath led me into any error, I am not stiff-necked in my intention. I commit all to the highest of all authority—to the Holy Roman Church, in whose obedience I die.’ When he had received the Viaticum he exclaimed with tears, ‘Christ, Thou art the King of Glory; Thou art the Son of the Everlasting Father.’

After this he became gradually weaker, and died on the 7th of March 1274.

WONDERFUL DEATH OF A PRIEST AND HIS TWO SERVERS AT HOLY MASS.

A.D. 1265.

Bernard, a holy Dominican priest, lived in his cloister of Santarem in Portugal, and superintended the management of the sacristy; and thus it happened that he had charge of two boys from the neighbourhood, in order to teach them to serve the priests of the Order at Holy Mass. As they were too young to be received into the convent they dwelt with their parents, but only at night, for during the day they seldom quitted the cloister. Bernard entertained the tenderest regard for these boys, and, as a reward for their good conduct and for their services at the altar, he taught them the Catechism and the first elements of grammar; moreover, he sought to bring them up in piety, in tender love for the Blessed Sacrament and for the Mother of God. Each morning did the children bring with them a little refreshment, consisting of a piece of bread and some fruit, which, when Holy Mass was ended, they took into a little side chapel, in order to make their frugal meal. In this chapel there was an image of the Blessed Virgin with the Divine Infant in her arms. The children never forgot to greet the Infant Jesus with a salutation; and the Divine Child, whose delight is to dwell amongst the lilies on account of their angelic purity, condescended to stoop from His Mother's arms and to beg them to give Him of their food. With joy they invited the fair Child, who often thus took part of their meal. Now at last the children resolved to make known the thing to Father Bernard. 'Father,' said they, 'the Child who rests in the arms of the Mother of God eats daily with us, but never does He bring food to give us. What shall we do?' Bernard, hearing with astonishment the relation of the children, gave them the following advice: 'Children,' said he, 'let it be when the Child cometh again to you on the morrow, and asks somewhat of you, that ye say fearlessly, "Lord, Thou dost will every morning to partake of our food, but we receive no morsel out of Thy hand; invite us, we pray Thee, and our Father Bernard, to dine with Thee in Thy Father's house."''

The children omitted not to do as their teacher had said. On the following day Jesus sat down between the children in order to partake of their meal. Then did they unfold their petition, and begged Him to invite them and their teacher to a feast in His Father's house. The fair Child Jesus accepted their petition with joy, and said, 'You could not give Me a greater pleasure than to make such a petition. Yes, I invite you as you desire. Inform your master that he may prepare himself by the feast of the Ascension. On that day, as you wish it, I will entertain you all three.' In great delight the two children hurried away, and informed Bernard of the invitation they had received for him. The man of God, convinced of the truth of this revelation, prepared himself with the greatest piety for that feast of which Christ said to His disciples, 'I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom' (St. Luke xxii. 29, 30).

On the feast of the Ascension he prayed with more than usual fervour, and then he went to the altar to say Mass, his face shining like an angel's,—the boys were already waiting to serve,—and after the Holy Mysteries were ended Bernard prostrated himself on the steps of the altar, signing to the boys to do the same. Whilst they thus tarried in deep prayer a

sweet sleep overcame them, and so they went to the feast of eternal life. This happened in the year 1265.

When the brethren, according to custom, went into the church after dinner they perceived the three bodies prostrate upon the steps of the altar—the priest in his vestments, the boys in their white surplices, and their faces shining with heavenly beauty. At first it was believed that they slept, but soon it was discovered that they were indeed dead. Hereupon they commanded the confessor of Bernard to give, if he could, some account of so extraordinary a passing away; and he related briefly, in presence of the whole community, what had happened to the children, and what the Lord had promised them. This news was heard with great joy and thanksgiving, and the bodies of Bernard and of the two boys were laid with holy and joyous ceremonies in one and the same grave.

In memory of this wonderful occurrence it was, with all the particular circumstances attending it, engraven upon the stone which was placed over the grave.

ORIGIN OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY GHOST AT SLAVINGS IN MORAVIA.

A.D. 1280.

Near the frontier which unites Lower Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia stands the city of Slavings in Moravia. Some hundred paces outside of this city the traveller will come across a venerable ancient church, dedicated to the Holy Ghost, close by a small monastery, which, being under the shelter of a friendly hill, stands alone and removed from the noise and bustle of the world.

Upon the spot where now the church stands tradition relates the following story, which may be found in the annals of the Moravian Church. Early in the year 1280 it happened that on one stormy night the parish church of Slavings was broken into by robbers, and, amongst other valuables, the monstrance, containing the Most Holy, was carried away. The perpetrators of this sacrilege were never discovered. But the mourning and distress were general on account of the great dishonour done to the Most Holy. Now it pleased God soon to change this sorrow into the greatest joy. It happened in the spring of the same year, as a shepherd was pasturing his flock in the neighbourhood of the present house of God, and certain countrymen were labouring in the fields hard by, that suddenly there appeared out of a little heap of stones, overgrown with bushes, a flame of fire; on seeing which the beasts which were feeding threw themselves on the ground, while the shepherd, full of astonishment, called out to the nearest labourer: ‘Fire! neighbour, fire!’

Now as Moses of yore in the desert, so did they desire to examine more closely into the cause of the flame, when lo, the stolen consecrated Host was perceived lying amongst the stones, surrounded by a heavenly light. Then with all speed did they make their way into the city; a priest therefore went out, and, carefully raising the Most Holy, carried it back to the parish church in the midst of a great company of rejoicing townspeople. The tradition further relates that when the procession arrived at the gate of the city the Most Holy

disappeared out of the hands of the priest, and returned to the spot where it had been found. Three times did this wondrous event take place, when both priest and people perceived that it was our Lord's good pleasure to choose the spot for His dwelling-place; and having with one consent resolved to build Him a church there, the Most Holy permitted the priest to carry Him without hindrance to the parish church.

The noise of this occurrence spread far and wide, drawing a great crowd of the faithful to the spot upon which the chapel was soon built, which shortly after—first by Bishop Dietrich of Olmütz, and afterwards by Gregory, Bishop of Prague, and later on by many other Bishops—was enriched with indulgences. These indulgences, some of one hundred, some of forty days, are all gained by those who devoutly visit the chapel with this intention.

Now this chapel continued the most honoured shrine for pilgrimages until the year 1423, when the wild heretical bands of the Hussites appeared before Slavings, and wasted the surrounding country. The privileged chapel was rased to the ground, but the little heap of stones where once the Most Holy reposed remained uninjured. As soon, therefore, as the war with the Hussites was concluded a second chapel was built over the spot, which in the year 1476 was consecrated by the Bishop of Olmütz.

This chapel, however, soon proved to be too small for the great crowd of pilgrims, and it was therefore enlarged, until the church as it now stands was finished in the year 1491, and dedicated to the most holy Body of our Lord. Two Popes, Sixtus V. and Pius VI., granted a plenary indulgence to all who should devoutly visit this church, and with true penitence receive therein the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. On account of this fresh indulgence the concourse of pilgrims became so great that the number of priests did not suffice to distribute the Most Holy to the faithful who assembled there.

In the year 1783 the Emperor Joseph desired to level the church to the ground, but at the earnest request of the citizens of Slavings it was allowed to remain, under the name of the Church of the Holy Ghost, as an object of veneration for the faithful. At the privileged altar, which stands in the midst of the church, the stone heap whereon our Lord was found is to be seen enclosed; and even to this day, the day on which the shepherd saw the miraculous appearance still goes by the name of the Countryman's Fire-Feast—*Bauern-Feuerfest*.

DEATH OF ST. MECHTILDE.

A.D. 1297.

Two holy Sisters, SS. Gertrude and Mechtilde, were Countesses of Hackuborn, cousins of the Emperor Frederick II. They were born at Islebe in West Saxony. From seven years of age Mechtilde had her education in the Benedictine monastery of Rodersdorff. She made her religious vows in the same house, and while yet young was removed to Diessen, near the Lake Ambre in Bavaria, where she was appointed Superior of the monastery of that name, and which seems to have at that time belonged to the Order of St. Benedict. This monastery Mechtilde rendered a perfect school of virtue; and knowing that strict discipline and a steady observance of rule are the means by which religious persons are to attain the perfection of their state, she taught all her Sisters the greatest diligence in these respects. She was

afterwards removed to the monastery of Ottilsteten, or Edelstetin, in Suabia, in order to restore discipline therein. In this new situation she redoubled her ardour in the sanctification of her soul as well as that of her Sisters. She prohibited the enclosure of her house to secular visitors, and by her abhorrence of worldly views and discourse banished out of her community

that dangerous spirit which introduces the world into the solitude of the recluse. Her bed was a little straw, her diet austere, and her employment manual labour, prayer, and pious reading. For a superfluous word she would burst into tears, and punish herself on account of an unnecessary breach of silence by fasts and watchings for several days. Once, when confined to her bed by sickness, she complained to her Redeemer that, like an excommunicated person, she was excluded from joining her voice with that of her Sisters in singing the midnight Office; but He appeared to her in a vision, and He assured her that He was more glorified by her ardent desires and obedience to His will than by any other sacrifice she could offer Him. When her end approached she received the Holy Communion; and one of her Sisters, a great servant of God and worthy of all belief, relates that she saw our Lord in unutterable glory at that moment, and heard Him say, 'My glory, My joy, wilt thou come and dwell for



DEATH OF ST. MECHTILDE.

ever with Me?' And as she breathed her last another Sister perceived how He received this pure and holy soul with these words: 'Come, My chosen, My dove, into the garden of rest, in which thy virtues shall bloom in everlasting glory.' She then departed, on the 19th November 1297.

THE MIRACULOUS HOSTS OF DEGGENDORF.

A.D. 1337.

In the early part of the fourteenth century, as is related by the Bavarian historian Aventin, during the war which the Emperor Ludwig carried on against the Popes John XXII. and Benedict XII., the Jews banded themselves together throughout Germany against the Christians, in the hope that the dominion of Rome and the whole Christian faith was about to come to an end.

Now in the town of Deggendorf, in Lower Bavaria, there dwelt a number of Jews engaged for the most part in commerce. Some of them resolved to get possession of the consecrated



THE JEWS VAINLY ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY THE CONSECRATED HOSTS AT DEGGENDORF.

Hosts, in order to expend their hatred and unbelief upon them; and for this purpose they succeeded in winning over a servant-maid, who was unable to redeem her best clothes from their hands, to lend her aid to their nefarious project, promising, on her bringing them the consecrated Hosts, a free pardon of her debt. To this stipulation she consented.

In the little church of St. Martin the Blessed Sacrament was at that time reserved for the use of the sick, and daily, at a very early hour, Holy Mass was celebrated. Here the wretched girl approached the altar for ten successive days, and after receiving the Host at the hands of the priest, she buried her face in a linen-cloth, where she deposited the Sacred Body of our Lord, and carried the Hosts at the end of that time to her more wretched employers. After

delivering up her precious charge, she received in return the clothes she had pawned. But vengeance followed quickly; hardly had she quitted the house of those miserable men than, struck by a flash of lightning, she fell dead to the ground.

When night came these Jews assembled together to wreak their insults upon the All-Holy. They stabbed the Hosts with awls, and, behold, drops of blood fell therefrom. They endeavoured to tear them asunder with the thorns of a wild-rose bush, when, lo, the Hosts remained entire, and a fair Child appeared. They then threw the Hosts into a heated oven, in order to consume them; but the Hosts remained uninjured in the midst of the heat, and for the second time the beautiful Child appeared before their eyes. They next laid the holy particles upon an anvil, and endeavoured to break them to pieces; but did not succeed, for the third time the fair Child appeared in the midst of them. Then did fear and horror seize upon their hard unyielding hearts, and desiring to make away with the holy Hosts they endeavoured to eat them; but this was not permitted. At each attempt a little Child took the place of the Host, and prevented it from being received. Upon this increased fear fell upon their guilty souls, and filling a little bag with poison they laid the Hosts within, and sank it in the nearest brook. Thus they thought that eternal darkness would hide the terrible outrage. But not so. The poison brought death to the town, for the waters of the brook were tainted, and all who drank of them fell sick. A suspicion had already fallen upon the Jews, and was speedily confirmed; for a watchman heard strange wailing voices at night from the brook, and on his calling the citizens to witness the same, a Jew who had been at the head of the conspiracy, although not himself personally present at the outrage, revealed the whole matter.

Then did the citizens rise up in a body to avenge the unrighteous deed, and, with the aid of the Count of Degenberg, the Jews were expelled the city or slain. The Hosts were discovered in the brook, and carried with great rejoicing to the church in a chalice, where they remained until a special church was built to receive them. These events took place in the year 1337.

The church, through the devotion of the people, was before long completed, and the ten miraculous Hosts were placed upon a small silken cushion, enclosed in a crystal cylinder, which was sealed and placed for adoration upon the high altar.

In attestation of the miracle, of the erection of the church, and the death of many Jews, there is still to be seen, carved on a stone pillar of the church, the following inscription written in old German :

‘In the year 1337, the day following the feast of St. Michael, were the Jews slain, and the city was in flames. Then was the Body of God found, as witnessed by both men and women. At the same time did they begin the building of God’s house.’

That the Jews ill-treated the Blessed Sacrament, and that those ten misused Hosts are the same which after five hundred years are to be seen in the church at Deggendorf, there is ample testimony and proof.

For five hundred years the innumerable processions of pilgrims to the shrine of the Most Holy Miracle (such is the name by which the Adorable Hosts are known), and especially at the time of the indulgence, which lasts from the eve of St. Michael to the evening of the 3d of October, have continued unbroken. Frequently the number of persons forming these

pilgrimages amounts to thirty or forty thousand; and it is not to be doubted that the greater number of these, after a worthy Communion of the Most Holy Sacrament, return to their distant homes, comforted, strengthened, and renewed by means of the grace flowing from the Heart of the Saviour hidden under the form of the miraculous Hosts.

THE MIRACULOUS HOSTS AT BRUSSELS.

A.D. 1370.

Attached to the beautiful church of St. Gudule, in the city of Brussels, is a chapel which stands on the spot where the following miraculous occurrence with the Most Holy Sacrament took place:

In the year 1369 or 1370, a very rich Jew of Enghien having won a sum of money from another, by name John von Loeven, who had become a Christian, persuaded him to deliver over to him several consecrated Hosts. After the false brother had examined many churches in order to carry out his devilish design, he decided upon the church of St. Catharine as that in which he could perpetrate the deed of darkness with least difficulty. On a certain night, therefore, he contrived an entrance into it, broke open the tabernacle, took out the ciborium, in which sixteen Hosts were contained, and brought it to the Jew. Now this fellow, overjoyed at having the God of the Christians in his power, called his wife and son and several other Jews, and threw the ciborium with the consecrated Hosts on the table for derision, and there he allowed them to lie. Soon after the Jew, by name Jonathan, was murdered by unknown hands. His wife and son, out of dread lest fresh misfortune should befall their house, carried the holy Hosts to Brussels, and committed them to the hands of their brethren. These assembled together on Good Friday in their synagogue, insulting the Blessed Sacrament in every possible manner, and at length, throwing it upon a table, they stabbed it with knives; when lo, blood flowed in quantities from those holy Hosts, and, seized with terror, the recreants at once sought how they might free themselves from so fearful a mystery.

In their embarrassment they had recourse to a Jewess who had become a Christian, and entreated her to carry the All-Holy to Cologne. The Jewess promised to do this, but during the night she was seized with so great fear that she resolved to discover the whole to her parish priest. She then did what she had promised. Now at that time Wenceslas, King of Bohemia, reigned in Brussels. When he therefore had heard of this sacrilegious robbery he caused those wicked Jews to be arrested, and, according to the laws of the time, to be burned. This happened on the eve of the Ascension of our Lord, in the year 1370. In expiation also of this sacrilegious robbery, and for a perpetuation of the memory of the miracle, the prince gave orders for a yearly procession of the holy Hosts, which should take place on the Sunday after the glorious Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Three of these pierced Hosts were carried in a golden jewelled monstrance, the offering of many princes. This monstrance may be seen to this very day in the Salazar chapel, at St. Gudule's, upon the altar of the miraculous Sacrament. A citizen of Brussels, by name Giles Van der Berghe, built a chapel upon the very spot where the synagogue of the Jews had stood, and founded three Masses

weekly, to be offered therein in honour of the Most Holy Sacrament. Upon a stone over against the altar is inscribed the deed of the Jews. The chapel fell later into the hands of Count Salazar, whence the name which it bears at the present day. Through a concurrence of events it has happened in these later times that this chapel should become the centre of the Confraternity of the Perpetual Adoration and that of the pious union for the supplying poor churches with necessities for the service of God.

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

A.D. 1380.

The Holy Eucharist was the very life of this saintly soul, whom the Holy Ghost Himself had chosen as His special tabernacle. Very frequently she approached the table of the Lord. This frequent Communion drew upon her the blame of many, but she bore it with the greatest humility. On one occasion, when it was represented to her that the great St. Augustine said he neither praised nor blamed him who daily communicated, she gave the following striking answer: 'Why should you then blame what St. Augustine blamed not?' When, in obedience to her confessors, she occasionally abstained from Holy Communion, she suffered great agony in all her limbs, but her union with the adorable Body of Christ restored her strength and health. She said once to her confessor, Friar Thomas, 'I am so perfectly satisfied after my Communion that I desire to receive no other nourishment.' 'But,' inquired he, 'on those days on which you do not communicate have you then no desire for food?' Catharine replied, 'When I do not receive Holy Communion I go into the church and I watch before it. This look satisfies me. Even the mere presence of a priest who has touched the holy Host withdraws me from all thought of bodily food and consoles me.'

Father Raymund of Capua was, of all her confessors, the one from whom she received the greatest consolation, because he satisfied her great desire for the Holy Eucharist and zealously defended her. Often did Catharine say to him in the greatness of her longing, 'Father, I am hungry; for the love of God feed my soul.' Therefore the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XI., by a special Bull, gave her permission to have a priest and a portable altar, so that she could, everywhere and always, without any permission, hear Mass and receive Holy Communion.

The following is related by this holy and trustworthy monk as having been performed by Jesus in the Holy Sacrament in favour of His dear servant:

'One beautiful morning, on the feast of St. Mark, we were called upon to visit some servants of God who were detained in the country. We returned somewhat late to Siena. Catharine said to me, "O my father, if you knew how I hunger!" I understood these words, and replied, "The hour for Mass is already past, and I am so tired that I hardly have strength sufficient to offer the Most Holy Sacrifice." Catharine was silent, but a few moments after she again repeated, "I am hungry." Then I betook me into the chapel, which was close by, and after vesting myself I began to offer the Holy Mass. When I turned round to give her the absolution I saw her countenance angelic and beaming with light; so changed indeed was she that I said interiorly, "Is not the Lord truly thy beloved Spouse?" and on turning again to the altar I added mentally, "Come, Lord, to Thy bride." At the same instant the sacred Host, before I touched it, *moved*, and came at more than three fingers' distance to the paten

which I was holding in my hand. I was so much occupied with the light that I had seen beaming from Catharine's countenance, and with the motion of the consecrated Host, which I distinctly saw, that I do not perfectly remember whether it placed itself alone on the paten or whether I laid it there; I dare not affirm it, but I think it came thereon of itself.

'I will now relate a prodigy,' continues Father Raymund, 'which I think not less worthy of attention. By order of my superiors I was in Siena, where I filled the office of lector, when I became acquainted with St. Catharine, and I exerted my best efforts to procure her the privilege of receiving the Holy Communion; consequently, when she desired to approach the holy table she addressed herself more confidently to me than to any other religious belonging to the monastery. One morning she experienced an ardent desire for Holy Communion, although her bodily sufferings were more than usually great, and she sent, therefore, one of her companions to me at the threshold of the church, requesting me to defer the Holy Sacrifice a short time, as she experienced an irresistible desire to receive Holy Communion. I cheerfully consented, went into the choir, and, after reciting my Office, continued to wait. Catharine had entered the church without my knowledge at the hour of Terce, hoping to satisfy her pious desire; but her companions, seeing the lateness of the hour, and knowing that after Communion she would remain several hours in ecstasy, begged of her to deprive herself of Communion for that day. She, with her usual humility, did not contradict them, but betook herself to prayer. She knelt at the very extremity of the church, entreating her Divine Spouse to deign Himself to satisfy the holy desires with which He had condescended to fill



MIRACULOUS COMMUNION OF ST. CATHARINE.

her heart. Having been informed that Catharine could not communicate, and supposing her to be at home, I began at once, after vesting, to offer Mass in the upper end of the church, at an altar which is dedicated to St. Paul. Catharine was therefore separated from me by the whole length of the edifice, and I was completely ignorant of her presence. After the consecration and *Pater Noster*, I intended, in accordance with the sacred rites, to divide the Host. At the first fraction the Host, instead of separating into two, divided into three portions—two large and one small. This particle, whilst I was attentively regarding it, appeared to me to fall on the corporal, by the side of the chalice over which I made the fracture. I saw it clearly descend towards the altar, but I could not distinguish it on the corporal.

‘Presuming that the whiteness of the corporal hindered me from discerning this particle I broke another, and, after saying the *Agnus Dei*, I consumed the sacred Host. As soon as my right hand was at liberty I used it for the purpose of raising the particle from the corporal upon which it appeared to fall, but I found nothing. Full of trouble at the circumstance I concluded the Holy Mass, and after having finished my thanksgiving I renewed my search by examining the corporal in every way, but all in vain. I covered the altar carefully, commanding the sacristan not to allow any one to step near it, and then I retired to ask counsel on the subject of our venerable prior.

‘In the sacristy I found my old friend the prior of the Carthusians. His object in visiting me was to obtain through my influence an interview with Catharine. I begged him to wait, as I had a matter of importance to communicate to our prior; but he replied, “You know this is a solemn feast, and I must return at once to the monastery, and you know it is far from the city; for God’s sake do not keep me, as in conscience I am obliged to speak with Catharine.” I desired the sacristan to guard the altar until my return, and we betook ourselves to Catharine’s house. I was greatly astonished to find that she had been gone some time to the church of the friars. There indeed, on our return, we found Catharine in the lower part of the church in an ecstasy, and as I was still uneasy respecting the accident that had occurred to me I entreated her companions to endeavour to bring her back to herself, as we were in great haste.

‘Whilst this was being done we seated ourselves near her, and I began in a low voice and few words to make known to him the cause of my trouble. Then did Catharine speak, smiling, and said, “Have you looked everywhere?” “Yes,” I replied. “Then you must not trouble yourself,” she replied, smiling again. I was silent; the prior began to converse with her a few moments, and after receiving his reply he left us.

‘Being somewhat consoled by her words, I said to her, “Good mother, I verily believe you have taken the particle of my Host.” “Not so, my father,” she replied meekly; “not I, but Another. I can only tell you that you will never find it again.” Then I pressed her to explain herself, and she said, “Father, have no further anxiety respecting the particle of the sacred Host. Truly I tell you, as my confessor and spiritual father, that the Heavenly Bridegroom brought it to me Himself, and I have received it out of His divine hand. My companions did not wish me to communicate this morning in order to inconvenience no one; so I had recourse to my Lord, and He appeared to me and gave me Holy Communion. Rejoice also with me in the Lord, and let us praise and thank Him together.”’

THE BLOOD-RED HOST AT SEEFELD

A.D. 1384.

Upon the high plains of the Tyrol, and enclosed amongst woody mountains, lies the village of Seefeld, belonging to the Cistercian foundation of Stams, with the parish church of St. Oswald and the chapel of the Precious Blood, visited far and wide by innumerable pilgrims. The fame which attaches to this deeply-secluded sanctuary arose from a miracle which in the year 1384 happened with regard to Oswald Milser, Governor of Schlossberg, a fortress which is situated about half an hour from Seefeld.

This nobleman, in the pride and power of his riches, was possessed with the singular conceit of being communicated one Holy Thursday at Seefeld in one of the large Hosts, which are only made use of by priests, that thereby his greatness and distinction might be made manifest before all the people. In vain did the priest object that he dared not do this thing—that at Holy Communion there could be no distinction of persons; rather that in it both high and low, rich and poor, are equal. The nobleman insisted upon his demand, and the priest at length, through fear and human respect, yielded.

Oswald knelt at the steps of the altar in all his knightly apparel, and with his helmet on his head; but hardly had the holy Host touched his tongue when the ground yielded beneath him. Beginning to sink he caught hold of the altar-step, but it gave way like wax. Terror seized the transgressor, and, with his danger before his eyes, he implored the priest to take the holy Host out of his mouth. The priest complied, and the ground became firm once more; but, terrified at the chastening hand of God, Oswald went at once to the monastery of Stams, there to confess his pride. His wife, as proud as himself, who had encouraged him in his impiety, was occupied in tending her rose-bushes, which she had found withered, when word was brought her of what had befallen her husband. She would not believe it, when behold, the withered bushes began to bud, and three lovely roses bloomed thereon. But her proud heart remained hard, and, in her rage tearing the roses from the bush, she became light-headed, and rushed frantically out into the wooded mountain. Her servants hurried after her and sought to detain her, but in vain. Like a wild beast she fled from wood to wood, until at last she fell down and died.

Oswald Milser, having done penance, died a good death at the end of two years, and in accordance with his wishes was buried at the entrance of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. To this day is shown in the church of Seefeld the deep impressions of the hand and the feet of the misguided nobleman. The velvet mantle which he wore on that Holy Thursday was made into a chasuble, and given to the monastery of Stams.

The holy Host which had lain on the lips of Milser, and which, when it was removed by the hands of the priest, appeared blood-red, was kept in a vessel in the church of Seefeld, and, after two hundred years, transferred to the chapel of the Precious Blood, which the pious Archduke Ferdinand II. caused to be built about the year 1575, where it remains to this day an object of the highest veneration to the faithful and an unexceptionable witness to the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

MIRACLE IN THE CHAPEL OF THE GRAY PENITENTS AT AVIGNON.

A.D. 1433.

It is well known that the godless sect of the Albigenses denied the Real Presence of the Redeemer in the Blessed Eucharist, and committed a thousand sacrilegious acts to show their contempt of the Most Holy Sacrament. Now after Louis VIII., King of France, had obtained a glorious victory over these heretics, he bethought himself to offer to the Saviour of the world a public satisfaction in reparation of these sacrileges.

The 14th September 1226 was the day chosen to carry out this solemn act, in which he would cease to be king. The King bade adieu to his capital and his beloved family, whom he should never more behold; and the city of Avignon, where he halted, saw with astonishment an affecting spectacle. Bishop Peter of Corbie bore the Most Holy Sacrament to a chapel which had been built in honour of the Holy Cross, and which stood outside the walls of the city of Avignon. In a garment of sackcloth, a rope round his loins, and with a taper in his hand, the King, accompanied by the Cardinal-Legate and his whole court, together with an innumerable company of people, awaited the arrival of the procession.

The Holy Sacrament was left in this chapel, and so long as this pious prince tarried at Avignon he brought daily to it some new token of fealty. So high and noble an example did not fail to be imitated, and the great concourse of the people gave rise to a pious confraternity which is known by the name of the 'Gray Penitents,' whose members to this very day wear a gray penitent's dress.

The Most Holy Sacrament remained in the chapel of the Holy Cross, but, after the custom of the time, it was veiled. On the day when it was carried thereinto in triumph, the crowd which hastened to the adoration was so great that it was necessary that the Blessed Sacrament should be exposed all night. Zeal could go no further, and since the chapel was filled with worshippers the Bishop thought good that the Blessed Sacrament should remain exposed day and night; a custom which was continued by his successors, and which received the approbation of the Holy See. Thus this chapel enjoyed the unexampled privilege of being chosen for the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. For two hundred years this pious custom continued in the chapel of the Gray Penitents. Then was it the good pleasure of God to make this His sanctuary yet more famous by renewing in it the miracle of the Jordan and of the Red Sea. Now the situation of Avignon is well known. Lying upon the Rhone, the district round this city is also watered by the Durance and by an arm of the Vaucluse. But this advantage has its dangers, and more than once the city has suffered from fearful inundations. In the year 1433, after heavy rains, the rivers overflowed their boundaries, and soon every quarter of the city was inundated. On the 29th November the water began to rise also in the chapel of the Gray Penitents, which was on the Sargue. The inundation during the course of the night became so considerable that the directors of the brethren, fearing that the water would rise to the stone niche where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, resolved, in order to avoid this calamity, that as soon as the smallest danger became apparent the Blessed Sacrament should be carried away elsewhere. They then rowed in a boat to the chapel, opened it, and beheld with astonishment that the waters stood right

and left four feet high against the walls, but, parting in the middle, an alley was left open leading up to the altar. After the two witnesses had remained long in prayer they hastened to carry information thereof to the other brethren. Let us hear how the record, from which the following is an extract, speaks of it:

‘Great was the miracle in this chapel when the water entered it in the year 1433. Very strong, on the morning of Monday, the 29th November, began the waters to rise. They pressed into the chapel as high as the super-altar. Under the altar were placed all paper and parchment books, clothes, towels, and reliquaries, none of which were the least damp, although on the following day, which was a Tuesday, the water had not ceased to rise. On the next day, Wednesday, the waters began to abate, so that on Thursday at Prime, when many people came to the church, all the water had passed away.’

The waters abated on the 1st of December; in crowds the people streamed into the chapel, and every one was witness that books, papers, napkins, and all else which lay under the altar, were not wet.

Such a veritable and palpable miracle gave rise to great zeal amongst the faithful and the brethren. As an everlasting memorial of this occurrence the brethren determined in future years to keep a special feast on the 30th November with great solemnity. All the members communicate on this day, taking off their shoes in the ante-chapel, and so advancing on their knees to the holy table. In the year 1793 this chapel shared the fate of other churches during the French Revolution—it was destroyed. But at the close of that disastrous period it was rebuilt by a noble family. Some time after the Archbishop of Avignon renewed the privilege which it had possessed of being a chapel of Perpetual Adoration—which privilege it retains to the present day.

ST. LIDWINA.

A.D. 1433.

A few weeks before the death of St. Catharine of Siena there began one of those lives of tremendous suffering which are wont to occur in times of peculiar wickedness. B. Lidwina was born at Schiedam, a small town in Holland, on Palm Sunday, 1380, at the hour when the Passion of our Lord was being sung, which appeared to foreshadow the life of suffering to which she was by the providence of God destined. She grew up in extraordinary beauty, and at the early age of twelve was sought in marriage. But, having given her heart to God, she prayed earnestly that He would preserve her as His own; and soon after, amusing herself by skating on the ice (according to the custom of the country) with her companions, she fell and broke a rib. From this accident followed the sufferings of a long life. She was at length confined to her bed by a complication of disorders, and for the last seven years of her life she was unable to stir any part of her body except her head and her left arm. At the beginning of her sufferings she found great difficulty in persevering in patience, but by the advice of her holy confessor, John Pott, she occupied herself unceasingly in meditation on the Passion of our Lord, until she obtained a perfect victory over herself. She had the consolation of being visited by angels, and frequently her sufferings were forgotten in long ecstasies. But her greatest joy and consolation was derived from the Most Holy Communion.

In addition to all her pains, Lidwina had to bear the hard-heartedness and cruelty of those whose office it was to console her. When still able to go to church her confessor would only allow her to receive our Lord twice a year; and when she was stretched upon her bed of



unexampled suffering he even then refused to bring the Blessed Sacrament, the only possible consolation in her incredible pains; but after she had borne many brutal and even public insults our Lord Himself interposed, and by the miracle of a bleeding Host compelled the parish priest to allow her to receive Him when she chose.

Thus the Holy Eucharist became at length her chief food; when she was deprived of it all her strength forsook her, but when she received it she was full of joy and holy consolation. Thus, between contemplating the sufferings of our Divine Lord and living by the Holy Eucharist, she gradually approached the end of her suffering life; and at length, quite alone, as she had wished, she yielded up her soul on the 14th April 1433.

Now did the power of the Holy Eucharist declare itself, for her poor body, which had been a mass of loathsome disease and a prey of worms, became so glorified that all who looked upon it (and it was visited by crowds) declared that nothing more beautiful could be

conceived; and it was glorified by its participation of the Flesh and Blood of the Redeemer, bearing in its beauty the promise of a glorious resurrection.

ST. COLUMBA OF RIETI.

A.D. 1467.

St. Columba was born at Rieti, a town in Italy, in 1467. At her baptism a dove flew three times around the baptistery and settled upon her head, whence she received the name of Columba. In her twelfth year her parents were desirous of affiancing her to a rich youth; but

she cut off her hair in token of her desire to abjure all earthly marriage, and took refuge in the church of St. Dominic, whose permission she entreated to enter his Order. By counsel of her confessor she went later to Perugia, where the inhabitants, on account of the veneration in which she was held, built her a convent. Animated by her example many young women surrounded her, to whom she gave a rule of life.

Like many other holy virgins, St. Columba, in the very bloom of life, received the grace of so ardent a desire for the Blessed Sacrament that she could not live without it, and when long deprived of it she frequently fell into long fainting-fits. Later on she was permitted, if not a daily, at least a very frequent Communion, from whence she received so great strength that from her twentieth to her twenty-seventh year she received no other nourishment than that which was afforded her in Holy Communion. This would appear impossible, but that it is established as a fact upon the highest authority, since Pope Innocent VIII., who then resided at Perugia, instituted a strict inquiry thereupon.

When her confessor once inquired how it came to pass that she could live by the Holy Sacrament alone, she replied, 'When I receive the Bread of Life, father, I feel so fully satisfied, spiritually and bodily, that all desire for earthly food leaves me, and I hope of the goodness of God that before the conclusion of this year He will give you such light upon this subject as will remove all your difficulties.' Soon after, on Christmas-eve, whilst Matins were being sung, Columba prayed for her confessor in an ecstasy, and she was heard to pronounce these words, 'To-day, to-day, he will receive the explanation.' On the following morning her confessor offered up his three Masses. At Communion he felt such spiritual peace that soul and body were wrapt in the sensible joy of possessing God. At the third Mass this heavenly joy rose to such a pitch that the taste and desire for mortal food quite forsook him, and during the whole day he found it was impossible to eat.

Now Columba knew in a vision what had taken place with her confessor, and the next morning she spoke to him in the following words, 'I am happy, my father, that you have tasted my nourishment, and that now you have learned how it cometh to pass that I am satisfied with the Bread of angels alone.'

THREE MIRACLES RELATED BY THOMAS À KEMPIS IN HIS CHRONICLES OF THE CONVENT OF MOUNT ST. AGNES.

A.D. 1471.

The pious author (or reputed author) of the *Imitation of Christ* relates the following marvellous operations of the Most Holy Sacrament in his *Chronicles of Mount St. Agnes*:

'One of our brethren,' says he, 'commenced to say Holy Mass at the altar of St. Agnes. For a long time he had been obliged to make use of two crutches in order to go there. After having said Mass he found himself, through the power of Jesus Christ and the intercession of St. Agnes, so much strengthened that he was enabled to leave his crutches behind, returning to us in choir with a joyful heart. One of the brethren asked him of what he had done and thought during Holy Mass; who replied, "I considered the words of the Evangelist St. Luke, who himself relates of Jesus, 'And all the people sought to touch Him, for there went virtue

out of Him and healed them all.' Therefore the Most Holy Sacrament, in union with the prayers of the Saints, is able even now to heal the sick both in soul and in body.'"

'A brother of our house, whilst he was saying Mass at the altar of St. Agnes, was one day suddenly and severely tempted by the devil in his belief concerning the Most Holy Sacrament, although this heavenly mystery was a constant source of the greatest consolation to him. Full of sorrow and pain he turned himself weeping to our Lord, and behold he heard an interior voice, which said, "Believe thou as St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, St. Barbara, and other holy virgins have believed who suffered death for Christ, nor ever doubted the least of His words." As soon as he heard these words every doubt vanished and the temptation passed away. After this he replied to all who suffered from such devilish temptations, "Believe as did Agnes, and thou wilt never err in the faith.'"

Thomas à Kempis died on the 24th July 1471.

That which has just been related as witnessed by Thomas à Kempis, of the healing of a crippled brother, happened in the same manner to the famous and venerable Dominican, Father Francis Lerma.

The offering of the Holy Sacrifice was the source of the greatest joy to this good man, and he was always occupied a considerable time over it. In order to put his patience to the proof Almighty God permitted him to become completely blind. Now when he found himself at length obliged to desist from study on this account, he cried out with holy Tobias, 'What joy have I now, since I sit in darkness and do not enjoy the light of heaven?' Nevertheless he bore with angelic patience the loss of his sight, having but this one regret, that he was thereby deprived of the consolation of saying Holy Mass, for his soul pined more for the Bread of Life than did his body for earthly food.

He resolved therefore to betake himself in earnest prayer to the Father of Light, who had so often restored to the blind the light of day even during this dying life. With humility he prayed Him to make him worthy to receive at least so much light as was necessary for him to offer up the Most Holy Sacrifice. After his prayer he was inwardly impelled to open a Missal, in order to try if he could not read therein. What was his surprise and joy to find that he could read every word clearly and distinctly. Full of joy he went to the sacristy, vested himself, and immediately returned to the altar and offered up the Holy Sacrifice with the same facility as he had done before his blindness; he could even perceive the smallest particle of the Host. And this grace was not evanescent; day by day he was able to see to read the Mass, but as soon as he left the altar darkness fell once more upon his eyes.

ST. JOAN OF VALOIS.

A.D. 1505.

St. Joan of Valois was the daughter of Louis XI. of France; she was deformed and remarkably plain in her appearance, but so much the fairer shone her interior beauty in the sight of God. Being compelled by her father to marry the Duke of Orleans, she obeyed; but he refusing to acknowledge her, she was obliged to submit further to a divorce. She was overjoyed on hearing of the separation, as by this means she regained her liberty, and could

serve God in the most perfect way. Her father gave her a dowry, and she then returned to her solitary life at Bourges, where she founded the Order of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

Now the life of this holy servant of God proves how the veneration of the Blessed Mother of God ever goes hand in hand with love of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament.

Whenever she received Holy Communion she shed such abundant tears that all who saw her were animated to similar devotion. One day she was very weak and ill, and her confessor ascribed this debility to overstrained devotion. Being questioned on the subject, she replied that she was invited by our Lord to a feast on the following day. The next morning, during Holy Mass, she was dissolved in tears. Falling into an ecstasy she then saw the Divine Saviour with His Mother, who presented her with a dish on which lay two hearts; and when our Lord desired her to lay her heart also thereon, Joan felt in her bosom, but found her heart was gone. She was full of surprise; but our Lord smiled sweetly upon her, because already had she so united her heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that her heart appeared to dwell rather in His than within her own body. This love for our Lord, which incessantly consumed her heart, became at times so overpowering that it was thought her frail body could not bear it. Her humility was so great that her deformities only caused her to smile. Later on this loving woman herself received the religious habit; but she was not destined to wear it long, for God took her to Himself on 4th Feb. 1505. She was canonised by Clement XII. in 1738.

THE VENERABLE CATHARINE OF JESUS.

A.D. 1510.

She was a discalced nun of the convent of Beatia in the province of Granada. Whilst yet in the world Catharine was powerfully drawn to the Divine Redeemer in frequent Communion. In proportion to her desire for this heavenly food, for which she prepared herself carefully by penance and continual acts of divine love, so in proportion increased the graces which she received therefrom. Once, being occupied in the service of her neighbour, it was late when she arrived at the church of St. Anne at Seville. The gates were closed, and Holy Communion seemed denied to her that day. She therefore betook herself sorrowfully to the parish priest, praying him for the love of God to give her the Blessed Sacrament. The good priest, who knew her virtue, hastened to fulfil her wish; but when he entered the church great was his astonishment in finding the tabernacle open and the candles on the altar lighted, although for many hours the church had been empty. But soon he perceived that it had been the work of angels, who by this desired to manifest how greatly the wish of His servant had been pleasing to God. Another time she began very early in the day to prepare herself for the visit of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, when, falling into an ecstasy, it was midday before she came to herself. At once she betook herself to the Carmelite church, but found the doors closed. Full of grief at thus being deprived of Holy Communion she turned her steps to another convent, which was known by the name of 'Our Lady of Victories,' praying the Lord that He would provide her with means to satisfy her longing. Again she found the gates closed; but at the same moment a priest, accompanied by many persons, arrived, who, without being asked, opened one of the church-doors. Hardly had she entered

the church when she perceived at the altar three religious vested and two ministers who held the Communion cloth, who appeared to await her coming. In truth one of them beckoned to her to come, and with great joy she received the Body of the Lord. On her return home she fell again into an ecstasy, when it was revealed to her that the ministers of the altar whom she had seen were angels, whom the Most Holy had sent in order to satisfy her holy desire.

After she had entered the convent of the discalced Carmelites the graces of God filled her to overflowing. One of the most remarkable was that which she received one night when she went into the choir in order to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. When her heart was lost in deep meditation in presence of her Lord, grieving that the King of Glory should remain so long without adorers, she was permitted to hear a wonderfully sweet melody sung by heavenly choirs to the honour of the spotless Lamb. 'Benediction and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen' (Rev. vii. 12). At the same time the church was filled with an unusual brightness, and it was explained to this servant of God that the angels make reparation in this manner for the negligence of men who forget and neglect their Lord and their God in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Then did she see the heavenly spirits cast themselves down before the tabernacle, and return praise and thanks to the Most Holy in the Blessed Sacrament therein dwelling. This consoling vision filled Catharine with joy, and in the words of Holy Church she began to say, 'We pray Thee, O Lord, that Thou wouldst permit us, in union with the blessed spirits, to join our voices and humbly to sing with them, "Holy, Holy, Holy!"' In token that her voice thus pleased the Divine Redeemer, she found herself surrounded by celestial brightness, as though He desired her to share the light of the Cherubim and the warmth of the Seraphim. This venerable servant of God died in the year 1510.

ST. CATHARINE OF GENOA.

A.D. 1510.

From her earliest childhood this dear Saint was drawn to a life of severe penance. At twelve years she desired to enter a convent, but she had no opportunity of carrying out her wish. Being a child of the noble house of Fieschi, which for a long time had been at variance with the family of Adorno, it was advised, in order to bring about a reconciliation, that Catharine should be given in marriage to the young Count Adorno, who was devoted to worldliness and the love of splendour. Thus her married life was one of heavy trial.

Prayer and solitude were her only consolation, and this retired life did not fail to displease her mother and her other relations. In order to satisfy them, therefore, she dressed herself carefully, and received visits, performing dutifully all that the world required of her. But her heart could not rest, and at length she was led to seek consolation at the hands of a certain holy priest in the convent of our Lady of Mercy. It was now that our Lord appeared to her, and gave her rest in the knowledge that the world was no longer to be her mistress, but that her life should be spent in loving penance. She gave herself up at once to works of mercy and humiliation, distributing her wealth and her clothes to the poor, who regarded her as a mother. She visited them in their miserable huts, waiting on them in sickness, and doing every office for them, however loathsome and repugnant to nature.

But in order to strengthen her for the severe life which she had chosen the Saviour permitted her daily to receive His most precious Body. As soon as our Lord had so wonderfully attracted her to Himself she felt the desire for daily Communion; and lo, wonderful to say (for in those days great difficulty existed with regard to frequent Communion), it was made easy for her, for it was not she who asked, but the priest himself who called her to the holy table. In such wise did the love of God ever more and more inflame her heart, and in proportion to her love so did she penance for her sins; and as her penances became greater, so greater grew her zeal for the service of the sick and the poor, and in proportion grew her desire and hunger for Holy Communion. She could hardly wait until Jesus should come into her heart.

When she was prevented, through bodily weakness, sickness, or any other accident, from communicating,

it was such a great sorrow to her that she felt as though she could not live. On one occasion, when she was so ill that her life was despaired of, she called her confessor, saying, 'Father, give me my Lord three times, and I shall recover.' After her third Communion she did recover. Her desire for Communion caused her great pain, whence she was accustomed to say, 'I have no heart like



COMMUNION OF ST. CATHARINE OF GENOA.

others; for my heart rejoices in nothing but in my Lord; therefore give Him to me.'

But however great her desire, she was always willing to forego this great blessing whenever obedience or love required it of her. On one occasion a priest suggested to her, by way of trial, that it might be wrong thus to communicate so frequently. This expression of the religious, which she esteemed as a message from God, she listened to with reverence, and in the spirit of holy fear she endeavoured to abstain from Holy Communion. When the father learned this after some days, and perceived hereby that the fear of sin in her was greater than her desire of consolation, he at once gave her permission thenceforward to communicate daily, which she did ever after to her great joy.

If during Holy Mass she fell into raptures, she would always return to herself at the moment of Communion. She used to say, 'O Lord, I believe that were I dead I should revive in order to receive Thee.'

Now it came to pass when Catharine had in this manner completely surrendered herself to the love of God that her husband came to the true knowledge of himself, and gave himself up to the service of God. Through his prodigality he had ruined his house, his creditors took all that belonged to him, leaving him out of pity but a pittance with which to support life. Catharine bore the trouble not merely with patience, but with joy. Her patience and gentleness in his trouble opened his eyes. Catharine made him no reproach, but gave him an assurance that she would lighten the burden of his lot as much as possible. This was the last touch which softened his heart; he entered into himself, repented him of his past life, and resolved henceforth to live a life of chastity. This was a joy for Catharine for which she could not thank God sufficiently.

From this time Catharine and her husband were united in their works of charity. She devoted herself to the hospitals, and with heroic love she waited upon the sick. On one occasion she was nursing a poor woman dying of the pestilence, who in her agony was unable to utter a word. Catharine besought her sweetly to say 'Jesus,' and when she saw that she could not, Catharine was greatly grieved. At length, after once more whispering the sweet name of Jesus in her ear, Catharine perceived that her lips moved with the endeavour to pronounce the word, when, being unable to contain her joy, and forgetful of her danger, she stooped over her and kissed those lips 'full of Jesus.' Truly she became stricken, but though she drew very nigh to death, God in His mercy restored her again to life.

Thus ever more and more Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament became her all in all. Through Him she overcame all weakness of body and lived a life of spiritual strength. Her conversation was so full of the love of God and spiritual wisdom that men came from far to see and speak with her.

At length the time came when, her body being consumed by the fire of love, it was clear to her confessor and to all who surrounded her that she must die. She received Holy Communion with greater joy than ever, and for three days previous to her death nothing else passed her lips. On the 14th September, as midnight approached, she was asked whether she would once more receive that heavenly food, upon which she begged that it might be brought to her at the usual hour. Upon being told that it had not yet arrived she pointed with her finger to heaven, as though to say that it would be in heaven she would receive it. When the hour approached for Holy Communion she said suddenly, 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,' and fell asleep sweetly and peacefully in the year 1510.

ST. CAJETAN.

A.D. 1547.

This Saint, who was of noble parentage, was born at Vicenza in Lombardy, about the year 1480. From his early childhood he gave undoubted signs of the direction his future life would take. He erected a little altar in his dormitory, before which he was in the habit of praying and meditating. Here he would call the servants of the house, that they might do likewise; and standing before his chamber-door he would beg for alms of the passers-by, that he might have somewhat to give to the poor and needy.

As a schoolboy it was his greatest delight to hear Holy Mass, to sing the praises of God,

and to say the Rosary in honour of the Blessed Virgin. He awaited with impatience the age which was considered necessary in order to receive his first Communion; and when the time came he received his Lord and Saviour with the greatest devotion. When a youth he entered into his worldly studies with energy, in order the better to defend the cause of the most holy Faith. It was his joy to serve at Mass, and the fervent devotion with which he assisted at the Holy Sacrifice edified all beholders. He prepared himself with the greatest care for the Most Holy Eucharist, which he received very frequently. Although of noble birth, he mixed freely with the artisans, distributed alms amongst the poor, and, above all, he attended the sick in hospitals. His dress in the streets was simple, and his behaviour so modest and retired that he could not escape the notice and admiration of all. This arose from a special care which he took always to walk pure and unspotted in the presence of God.

At the age of twenty-four, in order to devote himself more perfectly to the service of God, he embraced the ecclesiastical state, and out of his own patrimony built a church at Rampazzo, for the benefit of those poor people who lived at a distance from the parish church. Here he dwelt among them in the deepest seclusion; but after a time he quitted the country, hoping to be lost in the crowd of a city like Rome. But Pope Julius II. drew him from his beloved solitude, and made him Protonotary in his Court. In this new office the Saint learned the art of retirement even in the midst of the world, and strove after a still higher degree of humility; he redoubled his prayers and visits to the church, and took upon himself in a special manner the care of the poor and the needy.



ST. CAJETAN RECEIVING THE DIVINE CHILD IN HIS ARMS.

Having attained his thirty-third year, he resolved after a long interior conflict to take priest's orders; he took the solemn vows on the feast of St. Jerome. For his first Mass he made a preparation of three months, and seven days previously he fasted on bread and water.

At this time the heresies of Luther and his associates began to spread in the kingdom of Germany. St. Cajetan, full of zeal for the honour of God and His Holy Church and the recovery of souls, spared no pains in resisting the encroachments of error. It was for this purpose that he founded the pious association of the Love of God, the members of which bound themselves to labour with all their power to promote the divine honour.

Upon the death of Julius II. he resigned his public employment, and returned to Vicenza. Here he entered into the confraternity of St. Jerome, which was similar to that of the Love of God in Rome, but consisted simply of men in the humblest station of life.

In the midst of his labours amongst the sick and the poor his devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament found room to expand. The mystery of the Nativity more especially was the subject of his contemplation, in which the eternal love of God for man was made so wonderfully manifest. It was about the year 1517, when, according to his wont, Cajetan was rapt in ecstasy before the altar of the Crib on Christmas-eve. Tears fell down his cheeks, so deeply was he moved by the mystery of the birth of the Lord, whom he pictured to himself as a little helpless Child lying in the arms of His Mother. Then arose in his heart the great desire to entreat the venerable Mother of God that she would lay the Divine Child in his arms, but his humility permitted him not. Whilst, however, his heart longed for this favour, behold there appeared to him St. Jerome and St. Joseph, who, awakening him, desired him to hold out his arms and approach them to the Divine Mother. He did so, and the Queen of Angels truly laid the Child Jesus in his arms. The happiness which entered into his heart passes description. The impression which this vision left behind never more departed from the holy man during the whole course of his life, but so often as he received the Body and Blood of the Lord in Holy Mass he paused a little, believing that Mary herself was there offering him, under the form of the Most Holy Sacrament, her Divine Child to caress.

By the advice of his director, John of Crema, a Dominican friar, the Saint removed to Venice, where he took up his abode in the hospital and pursued his former manner of life. He emaciated his body with penitential exercises, and seemed to rival the most eminent contemplatives in the grace of prayer. Thence he returned to Rome, in order to renew his connection with the confraternity of the Love of God, many of whose members were as eminent for learning as for piety. It was at this time that, in concert with John Peter Caraffa, Archbishop of Theate, and afterwards known as Pope Paul IV., the Order of Theatins was conceived and founded for the purpose of reviving in the clergy the spirit and zeal of the Apostles. This holy brotherhood lived in Rome on Monte Pincio, and the year after settling there, the Constable of Bourbon, commander of the army of Charles V., marched from Milan to Rome, and took the city in May 1527. Philibert of Châlons, Prince of Orange, who succeeded in command after the wicked Constable had been slain, plundered the city, and was guilty of great cruelties. The house of the Theatins shared the fate of the rest, and St. Cajetan being recognised, and imagined to be possessed of great wealth, was barbarously scourged and tortured to extort from him his supposed treasure.

The rest of the life of our Saint was spent in repressing the disorders among the clergy

and founding convents of his Order; and the fruit of his labours was a very general reformation of manners, both among the clergy and the laity. He permitted no occupations, however, to deprive him of the comfort and succour of his daily exercises of prayer, and to the last he was favoured with extraordinary raptures. In 1537 he was for the second time made general of his Order, but on the expiration of his term he returned to Naples, when he governed the house of his Order until his death. When his hour of dissolution approached, his physicians counselled him not to lie upon the boards; but he replied, 'My Saviour died upon the Cross; suffer me to die upon ashes.' Thus died St. Cajetan on the 7th August 1547.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION AND THE EXPOSITION OF THE FORTY HOURS.

A.D. 1547.

Several Fathers of the Theatine Order, taking example by the zeal of their saintly founder, could not endure that our Divine Redeemer, who in His love tarrieth with us poor men in the Most Holy Sacrament under the form of an insignificant Host, should be so little sought, honoured, and praised with thanksgiving. The thought therefore occurred to them to found a congregation whose members should undertake in turns to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. All the hours of the year were distributed amongst the members, so that every hour of the year the Most Holy Sacrament should be adored in deepest humility.

Besides the devotion of the perpetual adoration, which was the result of the love of our Lord, the same congregation founded that of the Exposition of the *Quarant' Ore*, or Forty Hours, in honour of the forty hours during which the body of Jesus lay in the grave.*

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER RAISES THE DEAD TO LIFE AND HEALS THE SICK THROUGH THE POWER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

A.D. 1552.

The sufferings which this great Saint had to endure in his wonderful apostolate are not to be described. Hunger and thirst, wounded feet, rags, the ground his bed, the sky his covering, tormented by vermin, hunted by enemies, his whole body was often full of pain, and yet he ceased not, with death before him, to fast and discipline himself. He had but one consolation, and that sufficed him, prayer and the Holy Sacrifice; and so great was his love for God, that all suffering, all fatigue was sweet to him. Besides the gift of tongues, God had enriched him with the power of working miracles, by which means his words found way to the hardest hearts. In no place, however, did the Saint work more or greater miracles than at Malacca. If he did but take the sick by the hand they straightway recovered, and death itself could not resist the voice which recalled to life. One day he was called to the bedside of a sick boy of fifteen years. The physicians had given him up as hopeless; but the unhappy mother of the boy, a Christian, although she had been in former days a heathen, bethought herself to call in the aid of a sorceress. This woman thereupon brought a cord, wherewith she bound his arm, and went her way. Soon after the child lost the use of his speech and fell into frightful convulsions. The doctors now declared that he must die. Full of anguish, a friend of

* It is worthy of remark that the well-known Order of Theatines, and the work of the Perpetual Adoration, both grew out of a special devotion to the Holy Ghost, which was expressed in the confraternity to which St. Cajetan united himself from the beginning of his work in Rome.

the mother's called in St. Francis to give his advice. He came. At the sight of the Saint the child uttered a piercing cry, and his convulsions increased horribly. The Saint at once perceived that God had permitted the devil to strengthen the boy on account of the sinful means which had been taken for his recovery. He threw himself on his knees, and read aloud the Passion of our Lord, whilst he sprinkled holy water over him, by which means the screams and convulsions subsided. 'Give thy child somewhat to eat,' said he to the mother; 'to-morrow I will say Holy Mass for him; and as soon as he shall be able, thou shalt take him daily for nine days to the Church of our Lady, to hear Mass.' After giving this direction the Saint departed, and whilst he on the morning following offered Mass for him the boy rose up and was fully restored.

Whilst yet the fame of this miracle was in everybody's mouth an only and beloved



DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

daughter of another woman died. The mother in her grief ran everywhere seeking the Saint; but in vain, for he was absent. Day after day she inquired after him, and at length she heard of his return. At once she flew to him, and, in the words of St. Mary to our Lord on the death of Lazarus, exclaimed: 'O my father, if you had been here my only daughter would not have died. I adjure you, father, give her back to me. Only call upon the name of Jesus, and she will rise again.' The soul of the Saint was much moved by this sincere faith. Raising his eyes to heaven, he called upon the holy name of Jesus, and spoke to the weeping mother. 'Go,' said he, 'thy daughter lives.' 'But, father, she is already buried and in her grave.' 'Fear nothing,' replied he. 'Go, let the grave be opened, and you will find that she yet lives.' The mother hurried to the church, ordered the stone to be removed which covered the

body of her child, and, behold, she was full of life and health! Innumerable were the witnesses of this prodigy, and it was confirmed by the oath of many.

One day, when St. Francis Xavier had certain business with the Viceroy of India, at the appointed time Andrew, a young man in the seminary, went to remind him of the hour. He found him before the tabernacle sitting on a low stool, looking upwards, with his hands folded across his breast. Having observed him for some time, he spoke, but the Saint answered not, and the young man feared to disturb him whether asleep or in a trance. Two hours more passed by, and he discovered him in the same attitude in which he had left him. Now he feared again to leave his duty unfulfilled, and he succeeded in recalling the Saint to himself. When the latter discovered the length of time which had been occupied in contemplation, he hastened at once to the palace of the Viceroy. But hardly had he left the house when, falling into another rapture, he remained standing motionless in the street until nightfall, when he came to himself and returned to his dwelling. 'My son,' said he to Andrew, 'we must visit the Viceroy another day. This day God has willed for Himself alone.'

DEVOTION OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA TO THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

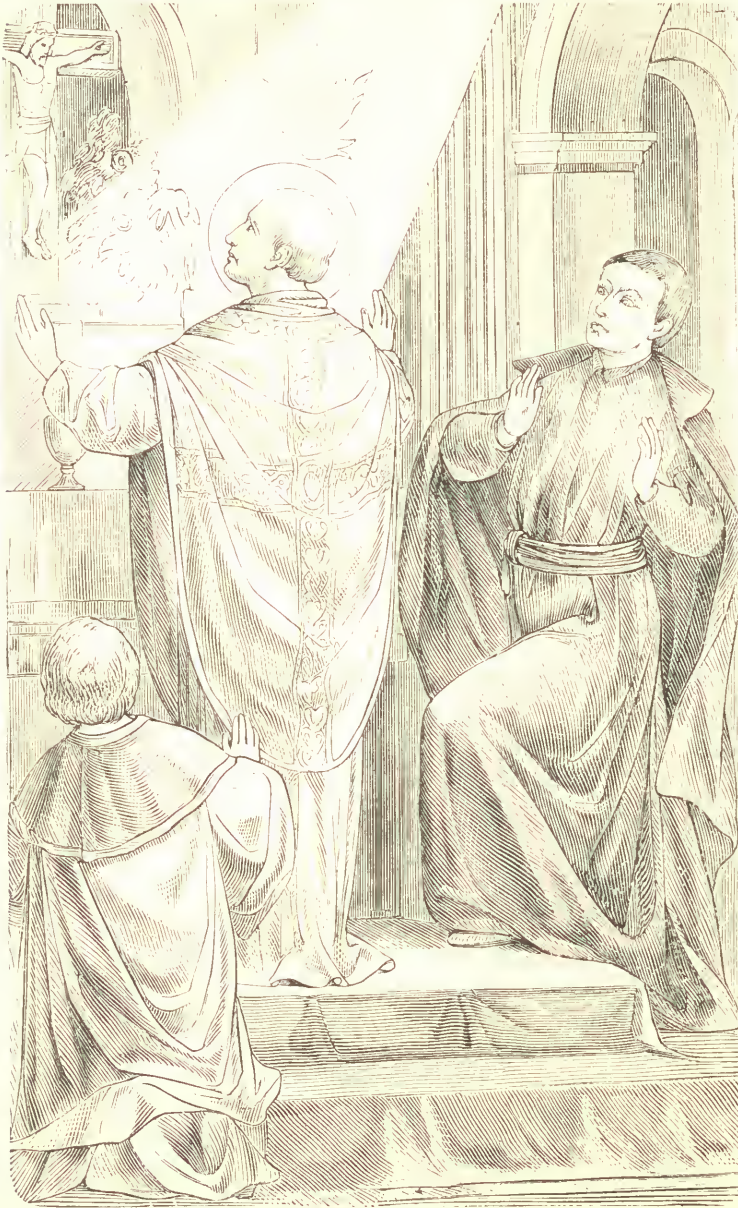
A.D. 1556.

Until the sixteenth century all Christian people over the world were united in the one true faith and in the belief of the glorious presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. The Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar was the Life, the Light, and the Strength of the Church and of all her children. True that in the eleventh century Berengarius attempted to deny this great mystery; but as an *ignis fatuus* the heresy disappeared, and the Catholic faith became only the more solidly and firmly rooted in the hearts of the faithful. From that time spread mightily the solemnity of Corpus Christi till it was celebrated throughout the world and by the entire Church.

But Almighty God, in the mystery of His counsels, permitted the Catholic unity to be violated in that unhappy sixteenth century, and in the heart of Germany arose the heresies which were to separate millions upon millions of the children of the Church from participation in the Most Adorable Eucharist, and thus estrange them from the most loving Heart of Jesus. Nevertheless, at that very time when Lutheranism and Calvinism and the innumerable forms of Protestantism of which these have been the parents seemed about to extinguish the love of God in the Blessed Sacrament, it pleased God to raise up a body of men whose souls should be fired with a yet more glowing love for Him, and who should rekindle in the hearts of men the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Ignatius Loyola was born in Spain at the Castle of Loyola. In early years his ambition was to be great as a soldier, but he learned the will of God concerning his vocation before he had attained the height of his career. He was wounded at the siege of Pampeluna, and his recovery being slow he desired to read all he could of the noble deeds of knighthood; such books, however, were not within reach, and the *Lives of the Saints* were brought instead, in order to beguile the tedium of his convalescence. In these he found the source of true honour and glory, and the worldly fetters which chained him broke away. He devoted himself to God, and became the founder of the Company of Jesus.

When St. Ignatius and his companions were ordained, Ignatius resolved to pass a year in preparation for the celebration of his first Mass; and when this time had expired he still deferred the awful solemnity from month to month. At length, at the end of eighteen months,



ST. IGNATIUS IN RAPTURE AT HOLY MASS.

on the feast of Christmas, in the chapel of the Crib of the Infant Jesus, he offered himself in union with this spotless sacrifice, as a freewill offering to the service of God. Two years afterwards he received from Pope Paul III. the ratification of his Society, and he was chosen by his companions as their first general.

St. Ignatius had learned by his own experience the marvellous effects of worthy communion. He required at the least an hour for the celebration of his Mass, and frequently being in a rapture he would occupy a much longer time at the Most Holy Sacrifice. Father Nicholas Lannoy, who on one occasion was present at his Mass, observed at the *Memento* that a flame of fire hovered over his head. He was on the point of hurrying in order to extinguish it, but was suddenly arrested by the sight of the face of the Saint, which beamed with divine light, and an illuminated expression of his eyes, which appeared to be lost in the contemplation of the Almighty. The ardour of divine love, which increased in every Communion, consumed

the Saint to such a degree that it was not possible for him to say Mass daily.

One Christmas-day, after having said his second Mass, he became so weak that it was necessary to carry him to his room, as he was believed to be dying. As he stood at the altar, the beating of his heart was audible. A stranger who happened to be present one day, and

perceived the tears that he shed, approached secretly to Father Strada, who had served the Saint's Mass, and said to him, 'He who has just said Mass must indeed be a great sinner. Let us hope that God has forgiven him. He has wept enough.'

The room which the Saint occupied was separated from the church by a partition. He caused an opening to be made in the wall, over against the tabernacle, and here he passed his happiest hours.

St. Ignatius died with the holy Name of Jesus on his lips on the 31st July 1556.

ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA.

A.D. 1562.

This celebrated Saint was born in the famous city of Alcantara in Spain. From a child he was a favourite of the Mother of God, who used to appear to him when occupied in the choir of the convent of Vinosa with saying the day hours to her honour. As a boy he was always earnest and gentle, the beauty of his soul reflected itself in his sweet countenance, so that even children called him the holy boy, although he never played with them. His great delight was to be in church. On one occasion he remained unusually long away from home; midday had passed, and yet he did not appear. On sending a servant to seek him his parents learned that he was found in the choir of the church, kneeling behind the organ, his face glowing like that of an angel, and so deep in devotion that it was with difficulty the messenger aroused him.

The holy and austere life of this beloved servant of God was in accordance with its beginning. Nevertheless his humility was such that the priesthood was forced upon him, and he accepted it only as an obedience after a long and earnest protest. But from the moment that he celebrated his first Mass, his union with God in daily Communion through continual contemplation of the bitter sufferings of our Saviour took such possession of him that he was almost constantly in a state of ecstasy, and, however much he endeavoured to conceal this extraordinary grace, it was, nevertheless, a not unfrequent occurrence that he was seen by many uplifted in the air, and therein suspended like a bird.

Once he journeyed as missionary through the bishopric of Badajos. After having passed the entire day in the pulpit or in the confessional, he divided the night into hours of prayer, meditation, and in taking the discipline. Being himself at all times absorbed in the mystery of the Cross he desired that all believers should equally value that divine mystery. For this purpose he erected crosses in all the roads, lanes, and heights. He himself not unfrequently carried these enormous crosses, with superhuman strength, up the mountain sides, and after having planted the cross, would address in fervent language the kneeling multitude. 'Fly from sin,' would he exclaim; 'fly from sin, for sin hath crucified the Lord Jesus Christ! By the holy Cross I entreat you, crucify Him not again by your sins.' If the carrying of the cross and his preaching made a great impression upon the hearts of his hearers, that impression was carried to its height, even to the highest amazement, when they saw him suddenly rise before the cross, and, with outstretched arms, remain for a length of time floating in the air with his eyes immovably fixed upon the image of Jesus thereupon.

But even more than the mystery of the Cross was that of the Most Holy Eucharist the object of his love and devotion, and the occasion of his most frequent ecstasies. When he approached the divine mysteries, then, was his heart content, because it rested in his Beloved. The Saint lost the consciousness of all things around him, and he prayed as though no one but Jesus Christ and himself existed in the whole world. On this account he would prefer to

choose a dwelling close to the Most Adorable Sacrament, and would cause a little opening in his cell to be made through which he could see the high altar.

It pleased God to reward his intense devotion for the Blessed Sacrament by the following miracle. In Pedrosa, where the Saint for a time dwelt in the monastery, the feast of Easter was to be celebrated with unwonted festivity. The warden of the place therefore entreated the Saint to celebrate High Mass, for the consolation of the people who came to this feast from all parts of the surrounding country. He promised to do so. The news spread quickly that Peter was about to celebrate High Mass, and such a crowd of persons assembled in Pedrosa that there was not room in the church for one-third of the number. They were therefore obliged to erect an immense altar in the open air. Now it happens usually at great feasts that in the forenoon people care but little for their souls; and in Pedrosa Satan did not lack a



ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA IN AN ECSTASY BEFORE THE CRUCIFIX.

goodly harvest of such carelessness; but on this occasion, seeing himself likely to be outdone, he resolved to throw a little impediment in the way of their prayers and devotion. Hardly had they begun to recite the *Credo* when a storm of wind arose, threatening at every moment to destroy the altar. Although the people were alarmed, but few were timid enough to slink away whilst Peter remained immovable and peaceful. In the midst of this commotion of the

elements he sang the Preface, and continued until he came to the *Memento*, which he offered to God with a gentle sigh.

Thereupon rose a second storm, the thunder rolled on all sides, and the lightning darted from every part of the heavens, whilst floods of rain poured from the black clouds overhead. The Saint quieted the people, and prevented the parish priest who desired to exorcise the storm. And indeed it was unnecessary; for, whilst the rain overflowed the whole surrounding country, not one single drop fell upon the altar, nor upon the place where the praying multitude knelt; neither did the wind extinguish one single wax-light; but in the spot where they were assembled it was as quiet as in a church. Hardly was the Holy Sacrifice concluded, when a song of thanksgiving rose to heaven simultaneously from the lips of the multitude for this fresh proof of the sanctity of His servant which God by this miracle vouchsafed to display.

St. Peter of Alcantara died on the 18th October 1562.

GLORIOUS VICTORY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OVER SATAN.

A.D. 1566.

It was by command of Pope St. Pius V. that the following history, drawn up by the learned priest John Boulése, was published, in order that all Christendom might be edified by the wonderful victory which Jesus Christ, in the Blessed Sacrament, in the presence of more than one hundred and fifty thousand persons, obtained over the devil in the city of Laon, in the year A.D. 1566.

It was during the period when the heretics known by the name of the Huguenots went about the provinces of France robbing and plundering, hanging priests and monks, profaning altars, overthrowing churches, and treading the relics of the Saints under foot. At their head stood the Duke of Condé. The Catholics on their part, driven by so many murderous deeds and desolations, took refuge in the right of retribution, with the Duke of Guise for their commander. Now as the heresy continued to spread the bishops and priests did all that lay in their power in order to preserve the faithful from contamination; they commanded public prayers and processions, and held meetings; but a miracle was needed, partly to strengthen their hearts, and partly to drive back the floods of error and to open the eyes of those who had been deceived; and this miracle consisted in the complete cure of a poor woman who, being possessed by the devil, was, in the city of Laon, one of the strongholds of heresy, and in presence of an innumerable multitude, entirely freed therefrom.

The poor woman, by name Nicola Pierret, was the wife of a tailor at Vervins. She had been piously educated in a convent, but possessed few spiritual gifts. At sixteen years of age she married. In the year 1565, on the day following the feast of All Souls, finding herself in the cemetery, she knelt and prayed on the grave of her grandfather, who two years previously had died suddenly. Whilst thus praying she remarked a deadly-pale man, clothed in a white linen garment, who said to her, 'I am thy grandfather.' At this sight Nicola started violently, and fled to hide herself in her house. Her husband, seeing her thus pallid and in fear, called her mother in haste. In vain was every effort tried to soothe her excitement; wherever she turned the spirit was ever present to her.

In this condition the unhappy woman went to confession. Hardly had she finished her recital when the spirit appeared in his natural form, saying to her, 'Be not afraid, I am thy grandfather;' and vanished. Being in a horror of fear the poor creature fainted away, and during her fainting fit the spirit gave her to understand that he was in purgatory, and suffering greatly on account of certain vows and pilgrimages which he had not performed, and which he entreated her mother and his other children to fulfil for him, as well as to have Masses offered for the repose of his soul.

The effect, however, of these appearances upon the poor woman was so far from being salutary that it was not long before her friends doubted sufficiently of their genuineness to



SATAN DRIVEN OUT BY THE POWER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AT LAON.

endeavour to set her mind at ease from what they supposed to be a hallucination by pretended pilgrimages; but she was not to be deceived. On one occasion, hardly had the supposed pilgrims left her when Nicola cried out, 'My grandfather is trying to break my arms and legs! Father, mother, have you no pity?' 'What wilt thou?' replied her parents. 'Why,' rejoined she, 'do they not make the pilgrimage?' 'Thou sawest, nevertheless, that they have departed on their journey.' Then cried Nicola, 'They have *not* departed. Aloysius is in his father's house by the chimney-corner, and my uncle Augustine is amongst his cloths.'

As it appeared to be an undoubted fact that some strange spiritual influence had taken possession of Nicola, her parents in their trouble had recourse to the clergy. A parish priest of Vervins, named Lautricht, together with several other priests, resolved to exorcise the spirit

who afflicted Nicola; and during the exorcism it appeared that it was neither an angel of light nor yet the spirit of her grandfather who spoke by the mouth of Nicola, but a bad spirit, even the Spirit of Darkness. This was confirmed when the pious and learned Friar Preacher, Peter de la Motte, a man of most holy life, undertook, with the permission of the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Laon, the second exorcism. The so-called spirit of the woman's grandfather was entrapped in his lie, for good angels never take possession of the bodies of men, and the spirits of the departed cannot, since they may not return to reinhabit a body before the general resurrection. Soon after this, during a swoon, Nicola saw no longer the form of her grandsire, but that of a fearful black man, and she herself knew that it was the devil himself who had taken possession of her. After this she refused to consent to anything the evil spirit desired of her, and with the courage of a martyr she resisted all his attacks throughout the whole period of her possession.

On the first Sunday in Advent, the 2d December 1565, about ten o'clock in the morning, Nicola was overcome by a frightful fit of rage. Her husband, not being strong enough to bind her, called two men into the house, who overcame her and held her, so that she could not escape. Wherefore this access of rage? Even because at the selfsame moment the parish priest was commending the poor child to the prayers of the faithful, and was himself in the act of praying for her. On the same day Nicola begged for a little drink, as she was exhausted. Her husband poured wine in a glass, and by the counsel of her grandmother mixed with it, unknown to her, some drops of holy water. The invalid attempted to drink it, but was immediately seized with frightful convulsions, all her nerves were drawn together, her hands were clenched, and her face was so altered that she lost all appearance of a human creature. The glass of wine, however, continued to be held to her lips, and the evil spirit fled for a short time, leaving Nicola in a deep swoon.

After this she lost all desire for sleep and nourishment. The pious monk De la Motte, foreseeing the evil effects of abstinence, begged her to eat. She replied she could not enjoy her food. Then he commanded her to do her utmost, and food was brought twice a day from another house, and she forced herself to obey.

On the 3d of December the exorcisms were openly begun in the church, near which a number of Catholics and Calvinists dwelt. Whilst De la Motte said only the preliminary prayers which the priest offers at baptism, the evil spirit knew and cried out, 'Wilt thou then baptise me?' But the exorcism pained him horribly. Nicola writhed about like a snake. She arose on her feet, and threw the men who held her upon the ground. Her bones were heard to crash as though a stick were being broken into many pieces. Being asked why he had desired Masses, pilgrimages, and alms, and had commanded Nicola to obey the monks and even to fast, he replied, 'I did not desire to be recognised; my business is lying, deceit, and fraud.'

Another time when the monk after High Mass made use of the same prayer of exorcism Satan howled like a wild beast, and when the priest placed a consecrated Host wrapt in a napkin upon the breast of the poor woman, her throat, eyes, and face swelled suddenly, and all her features became horribly distorted. Then Satan set up such a frightful roaring that he was heard even in the market-place. Being adjured to tell his name, 'I am Beelzebub,' replied he; 'at present I am alone in possession of Nicola.' The monk then caused the name to be written on many pieces of paper and burned in the flame of a blessed candle. During this the cries of

the possessed resembled those of one whose feet might be held in the fire. The evil spirit, not being able to bear the pain, fled away; and Nicola coming to herself, and knowing her wretched state, wept, and cried out, 'Jesus and Mary! my Creator! my Father! come to my assistance!' In these holy dispositions she often remained for eight hours, until the evil spirit retook possession of her. When the monk observed that the Most Holy Sacrament caused Satan the most pain he resolved to confess Nicola very frequently, and to give her Communion daily. The afflicted woman herself acknowledged that she was relieved and strengthened by this heavenly nourishment.

At another exorcism De la Motte asked Satan whither he went on leaving Nicola. 'I go up and down, doing my business,' he replied. 'Whence comest thou to-day?' 'From the forest of Montreuil and from that of Tenailles.' These forests were the dwelling-place of many robbers, whom he mentioned by name, together with their misdeeds. He called the Huguenots his good friends. He discovered the secret sins of many vicious persons, declaring them to be his children. To Nicola's mother he said, 'Go, thou art not at the end of thy sufferings; before long I will make thy daughter deaf and dumb and blind.'

One day the priest Bourdet, to whom De la Motte had made over his power, inquired of the evil spirit the reason of his occupation of the body of Nicola, and he replied, 'It was on the feast of St. Anne, four years ago, that Nicola with the permission of her mother took her little sister for a walk. The little one had in her hand a rosary made of agate stones, which her mother had formerly received in pledge. This was secretly stolen from the child; and on their return when the mother required it back it had disappeared. Nicola had to bear the blame. 'The devil take thee!' cried the mother, full of rage; 'hadst thou not gone out the rosary had not been lost.' 'From that time,' continued Satan, 'have I taken possession of her, and often sought to carry her away, because her mother had given her to me. I have prevailed upon her to acts of stealing. I have put bad words into her mouth; I have prevented her from fasting, but I have never succeeded in entering into her body until her husband gave me a right over her.' Then turning to Nicola's husband, he said, 'Rememberest thou not that in an access of anger thou didst give her to me? From that hour,' said Beelzebub, 'have I taken possession of her and tortured her.'

'And now that thou hast told me the reason of thine entrance, so shalt thou ere long quit thy dwelling,' replied the exorcising priest; 'for the possessed shall confess her sins; shall seek forgiveness of her father, her mother, and her husband, and return to them the stolen things; and then thou wilt be powerless.'

'I know how to prevent all that, for at my departure I will make her deaf, dumb, and blind; then mayst thou proceed as it may please thee.'

All this the impure spirit so perfectly fulfilled upon the person of his victim that De la Motte turned again to God, and full of faith in His almighty goodness he conceived the thought of driving Satan from his possession through the power of the Most Holy Sacrament. Early one morning, in the presence of the parents of the poor child, he laid a consecrated Host upon her lips, and in the same moment Nicola opened her mouth and received the Bread of Life, upon which her sight, hearing, and speech were immediately restored. Nicola folded her hands and thanked God, praying aloud; at the same time her face shone with more than natural beauty, and her humble loving appearance rejoiced every heart. But as soon as the form of

the Most Holy had passed, then returned Satan with redoubled fury. De la Motte, however, presented another consecrated Host before her eyes, and he fled, but only to return again and take possession after a short period had elapsed.

And now from this time began a steady strife between Christ and Satan, or, as our historian expresses it, a violent engagement on the part of the Body of Christ against Beelzebub. The most holy Host was placed near the possessed woman that it might serve as a safeguard against her fearful foe. It remained near her by day and by night, and accompanied her even abroad. The holy Eucharist became her daily food, and because none but a priest may dispense the Blessed Sacrament, so it came to pass that priests were always by her when on her journeys, or at home, or in confinement. Whenever Satan with his companions tormented his victim,—if he caused her to be deaf, or dumb, or blind; if he deprived her of the use of her reason; if he dashed her to the ground and dislocated her limbs; whenever he caused the wretched woman to wear a fearful expression of face, and to howl and bellow like a wild beast in presence of the Most Holy Sacrament, which was carried near her,—then did the priest lay the self-same Host upon her lips, and she would immediately open her mouth and Satan with his retainers would flee. On all these occasions Nicola, on the return of the full use of her reason, would praise and bless God with so sweet and bright an expression of countenance that all who beheld it exclaimed, ‘Behold, this is the finger of God!’

On the 8th January 1566, Bishop John of Laon himself undertook the exorcism. Upon the question being put, ‘What is thy name?’ ‘Beelzebub,’ replied the evil spirit, ‘the highest amongst the devils after Lucifer.’ ‘What is the number of thy companions?’ ‘There are nineteen with me to-day; to-morrow there will be twenty of us. Nor will this be all, for I perceive that I must summon all my strength against thee, and shall require yet more aid.’ ‘I command thee,’ replied the Bishop, ‘in the name and power of God, together with thy companions, depart from hence without delay.’ ‘Truly,’ replied the demon, ‘thy command will I obey, but not yet and not here. My business in this city is not yet completed.’

At these words the Bishop presented the holy Host before him, and at the same moment the demon uttered a frightful shriek, and Nicola became blind, deaf, and dumb. Then did the Bishop place the Blessed Sacrament upon her lips, and she received it with the greatest devotion; but in a few minutes was once more under the possession of Satan. Now when he saw that through the power of the Most Glorious Sacrament he was continually overthrown the spirit threw all his force upon the right leg and left arm of Nicola, and she remained lame for many days, until she was completely free from his power. This delay was ordered by God in order that the numerous witnesses of these exorcisms might be brought to a certain conviction of her complete cure. Thus the strife between the All-Holy and Satan lasted from the 3d of January to the 8th of February 1566, when at last the Most Holy Eucharist obtained a perfect victory over the devil.

On that day Nicola, accompanied by the monk De la Motte, was driven in a carriage to Laon. To all the world it had been most clearly shown that a soul in a state of grace could not be touched by any of the devices of Satan. The evil spirit may not take up his dwelling in a spirit at peace with God. It was by permission of God, for His own holy designs, that the demon was able to possess and torment the body of Nicola, but the soul in which Jesus dwelt he had no power to harm. It was, then, on the 8th of February that Nicola was taken

to Laon. It had now become known far and wide to believers and unbelievers, to Catholics and Huguenots, and therefore it was deemed prudent that a secular tribunal should be in attendance, composed of nine persons selected from the various religious parties then prevailing. Besides these, a judge and advocate, the deacon (the president) of the ecclesiastical court, and other clergy, as well as the domain judge of the Bishop and other distinguished persons, assembled together and remained the whole night in the inn, where she was taken. Also the most creditable physicians and the most accomplished surgeons were present. Thus the night through was Nicola sharply observed and watched.

At length the Bishop, having prepared himself by prayer and fasting, began the last exorcisms; and Satan being driven more and more into a corner, the Bishop asked the fiend the following question after High Mass: 'Tell us, wherefore hast thou entered into the body of this upright, simple, young Catholic woman?' 'By the command of God,' replied Satan; 'on account of the sins of the people, and to show to the Huguenots that there are devils who can possess men when God permits. They will not believe it, but I will show them that I indeed am a devil. I am driven here that they may be converted or else become hardened, and indeed I must finish this business and fulfil my duty.'

Now at one o'clock were Vespers sung at the cathedral, followed by a glorious procession, in which Nicola was conducted by eight or ten strong men. After the sermon she was led upon a tribune, that she might be seen by the whole assembled multitude. The possessed woman was thrown into a fury as she was carried on to the tribune, so that fifteen men were hardly able to hold her. At this final exorcism were present all the dignitaries of the Church in Laon, as also the procurator of the king, many judges of the realm, magistrates, and other distinguished persons, also the paymaster of the Prince of Condé, who was the head of the Huguenots, and many other heretics. The people ran thither from all sides. After a blessed candle, which Satan endeavoured to extinguish, had been fastened to the foot of the crucifix the Bishop ascended the tribune. Suddenly the possessed woman turned her eyes upon the clergy, and Satan asked them whether they desired that he should withdraw. Without, however, taking notice of his question, the clergy raised their voices and said, in the Latin tongue, 'Lord God, how long shall the enemy rise up against Thee? Look down upon our unhappy one with eyes of pity! Consider and hearken to our prayers that the enemy may not boast of a victory over Thy people. Thou art the God of strength. Confound him! for we have no defence but Thee alone!' After adding many such words they called him particularly 'accursed.' 'How mean you this?' asked he. They replied, 'Thou hast injured God irreconcilably; thou art fallen from love and from hope, and hast nothing but eternal damnation to expect.'

Then the noble Bishop, together with his clergy, began the exorcism, and the possessed woman became swollen and her face distorted, and stretching her tongue towards the Bishop with derision, the fiend said, 'Thou hast not eaten to-day, thou art very weak;' and when the candles were lighted he blew them out, and on their being rekindled, 'How foolish,' said he, 'to light tapers in broad daylight!' Then pieces of paper, upon which his name was written, were burned in the candles; whereat, however, the devil showed but little uneasiness. When he, by the Gospels, prayers, exorcisms, and burning of his name, was adjured to quit his habitation, he answered, as at the first, that he had as yet no desire to do so.

‘I ask thee no longer,’ replied the Bishop, ‘whether thou *wilt* depart; but I command thee, at once, and immediately, by the power of the living God, and the precious Body of Jesus Christ, His dear Son, who is here present, to depart!’

‘Yes,’ cried Satan, ‘*I acknowledge that here is truly present the Son of God. He is my Lord and Master.* I am grieved to acknowledge it, but I am compelled.’ And again he repeated with fury, to the astonishment of the assembled crowd, ‘Yes, truly, *I shall depart hence through the power of this Body of God.*’ This he repeated continually. ‘Nevertheless,’ continued he, ‘I will not go away empty handed. By the holy Blood, I will keep my prey! I will seize the nose of the little domain judge of Vervins, and that of Nicholas Maigret, and carry them off. Or give me thine own head, and see whether I cannot bear it away.’

‘No,’ replied the Bishop, ‘I can well protect myself. O thou evil unclean spirit, I command thee, in the name and power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, who is here present, depart for ever from this poor creature, and without doing her an injury, go into the deep of hell, and there suffer thy torments everlasting. Get thee out, unclean spirit, get thee out!’

Then did the spirit afflict the woman until the crowd, astonished and affrighted to hear the voice as though of a mad bull, exclaimed aloud, ‘Jesus, mercy!’ The Bishop continued to drive Satan till at last Nicola fell senseless in the arms of her watchers. She was laid upon cushions. In a few minutes, however, she arose, and being no longer bound, Satan threw her upon the holy Bishop. He drew back full of fear, and turned as pale as death; but, regaining courage, he presented the holy Host to the eyes of the possessed woman, and the people fell on their knees weeping and praying. Satan fled a second time with a roar as of thunder. A tumult arose amongst the crowd—some crying, ‘To arms, to arms!’ and others, ‘Bare the head and bend the knee before the precious Body of our Lord and Saviour.’ The Bishop turned round, commanding silence and prayer in the name of God; and once more the multitude, with one voice, fell on their knees, imploring the mercy of God on the woman. But the Bishop, always armed with the most holy Host, as with a sword, continued to persecute the fiend until at length he fled from the power and might of our Saviour, in smoke, lightning, and two claps of thunder, to wander through the streets of the city. Thus for the third and last time, at three o’clock in the afternoon, at the hour when our Lord by His death triumphed over death and hell, the evil spirit left the body of his victim for ever.

ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA.

A.D. 1563.

The young Stanislas, being drawn to embrace the religious life, and to enter into the Society of Jesus, and finding his father utterly unwilling to give his consent, after two years fell ill, and appeared to be at the point of death. The consolations of religion were denied him, for being placed in the house of a Lutheran no one was willing to call a priest to give him the Viaticum. Then full of deep sorrow, the youth addressed himself to St. Barbara, the patroness of the dying, beseeching her to obtain for him the Holy Viaticum, that he might die a good death. His prayer was heard. Full of confidence he slept, and during his sleep two angels appeared to him, from whose hands he received what he had begged for—the

Bread of Life, the Most Holy Body of the Lord. At the same time the Most Blessed Virgin, whom he loved tenderly, appeared to him, and revealed to him that he should not die then, but that he should enter into the Society of Jesus.

As soon as his health was restored he hastened to the Provincial of the Jesuits in Vienna, who, however, fearing the displeasure of his father, refused his request. The Saint, putting his trust in God, and taking advice from his confessor, left Vienna in a pilgrim's garb, wandered



to Augsburg, and after that to Dillengen, where resided at that time Blessed Peter Canisius, Provincial of the Order, and begged of him to be received. The father did not at once grant his request, but admitted him on probation. Stanislaus undertook all the menial offices which were put upon him with such sweetness and alacrity that the novices were astounded. Three weeks after Peter sent him to Rome, to the General of the Order, St. Francis Borgia, with the request that he should be allowed to enter the Order according to his desire. Here he threw himself at the feet of the holy Francis, who gave him the much-coveted habit on the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.

And now he entered into the duties of his state with all the fire and energy of a burning love of God. But never was his face so lighted up with holy joy, never did his love of God appear more intense, than when he assisted at Holy Mass. After Communion he would fall into an ecstasy, and then such blissful words would

come from his lips that even the fathers who had grown gray in the ways of holiness were never tired of listening to him.

This love of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament not only gave him an unalterable peace, of which nothing was able to rob him, but it seemed to overflow on all who came near him. A novice, who could not attain that inward peace, applied one day to the holy youth, begging him that he would pray for him. 'Come,' said he, 'and let us go into the church, and pray

before the Most Holy Sacrament.' Scarcely had they approached the altar and begun to pray when the heart of the novice was filled with consolation and peace.

The venerable father of the Order had the greatest joy in this holy youth, but he soon found that the flower was ripe for heaven, and would speedily be called there to unfold its fullest beauty. Stanislas himself had an anticipation of his early death, saying that he hoped to be called to heaven on the feast of the Assumption of his dear mother Mary that he might celebrate it there with the holy angels. His prediction no one would attend to, seeing that he gave no signs of illness. But on the eve of the feast of St. Lawrence he sickened; and on entering the infirmary he signed his bed with the sign of the cross, and with an expression of joy exclaimed, 'If it be God's will that I should rise again from this bed, His will be done; but believe me, I shall never again rise therefrom.' His sickness was a tertian fever, without apparent danger. On the 14th of August he lost consciousness a little after midday. When it returned he asked for the Holy Viaticum. For the last time he received the Body of the Lord, lying on the ground, after which he was anointed. When he had passed some time in prayer he asked for a crucifix, and, after kissing it, cried suddenly, 'I see the Most Blessed Virgin with the angels;' and so he fell asleep on the 15th of August 1568, in the eighteenth year of his age.

MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF THE PARISH PRIEST OF MONCADA, IN SPAIN,
FROM ANGUISH OF SPIRIT.

A.D. 1570.

For a length of time this pious priest had celebrated Holy Mass without any conscientious scruples, when suddenly he became the prey of a violent doubt, whether or not he had truly received priest's orders. This doubt increased from day to day, so that at last he came to the determination no longer to say Holy Mass. At the persuasion of a wise director, however, he continued for a time to perform his priestly functions.

Nevertheless the trouble, instead of diminishing, continued to increase upon him, and that to such an extent that his hands trembled in the act of consecration. Now he came at last to the resolution of journeying into Valencia, in order to entreat the Bishop of that diocese to reconsecrate him. In this place it pleased Almighty God to deliver him from his trouble, and to give him light and peace, by means of a very remarkable miracle.

On Christmas-day, during his first Mass, a child of five years of age observed in the Host which the priest had consecrated a beautiful little child, and in like manner with the second and third Masses. The child, in his delight, related the circumstance to his mother, who repeated it to others, through whom it reached the ears of the priest himself, who, it may be believed, was greatly comforted thereby. However, his scruples were not entirely removed. He doubted whether the child might not have been deceived, and therefore he caused him to be brought and carefully examined. But the answers of the child were so accurate that he found no reason for doubting the reality of the appearance. Yet the strength of his difficulty was so great that in order to obtain perfect rest he commanded the child to be brought the following festival to attend his Mass, in the hope that the renewal of the miracle might perfectly release him from his trouble. He bethought himself of a singular means. He took

three ordinary Hosts, but consecrated only two of them, one for the monstrance for adoration, and the other for himself in Holy Communion. After Holy Mass was ended he called the child to him, and showed him the two remaining Hosts, the one consecrated and the other not, and asked him in which of them he saw the Holy Child, when without hesitation, the little boy pointed to the truly consecrated Host. At this last miracle the peace of the good parish priest returned to him. Here we may say, as St. Gregory said of the Apostle St. Thomas, 'The unbelief of this priest is more profitable for the strengthening of our belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament than the faith of all the rest of the faithful.'

THE NINETEEN MARTYRS OF GORKUM FOR THE HONOUR OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

A.D. 1572.

In the year 1572 the Prince of Orange commanded his general, Martin Brandt, to lay siege to the city of Gorkum. Now Gorkum is situated on the Maas, in Holland. When therefore the general, who with his army were rank Calvinists, appeared before the walls of the city, the Catholic inhabitants, who remained faithful to their faith and to their rightful sovereign, withdrew, together with all the regular and secular clergy of the surrounding neighbourhood, and retired into the fortress. Shortly after, however, the garrison surrendered on condition that all should be allowed safe conduct and safety of life and limb. The Calvinists took possession of the fortress, but all the Catholics were ejected at midnight, except the clergy, who were thrown into a dungeon. Their names were as follows: Nicholas Pic, Guardian of the Capuchins; Godfrey Duneus, secular priest; Cornelius van Vic, Capuchin; Jerome van Werden, Vice-Guardian of the Capuchins; Theodore Emden, chaplain of the convent of St. Agnes, a Capuchin; Nicasius John Hezius, Capuchin; Wilehad the Dane, Capuchin, aged ninety; Antony van Hornaas, Capuchin; Francis Rod, Capuchin; Peter van Ask, Capuchin lay brother; Cornelis van Dorstadt, lay brother; Godfrey Mervellan, Capuchin; Leonard Vecchel, parish priest of Gorkum; Nicholas Poppel, priest of Gorkum; John van Oostervic, canon regular of St. Augustine, a very old man; John, priest of Hornaar, Dominican; Adrian Becan, Norbertine; Andreas Wallas, priest of Heinoort; Jacques Lacop, Norbertine. On the Friday after these holy confessors had been thrown into prison, meat was brought to them; but although they were starving they would not taste thereof. Thereupon were they tormented and beaten, derided and insulted in every possible way, although some of them were over sixty, others over seventy, and one almost ninety years of age. Already had they torn the clothes of some, in order to beat them with rods, when a false alarm of the arrival of a Spanish force caused their unmanly tormentors to take flight. This short respite enabled the patient sufferers to prepare themselves by prayer, confession, and mutual consolation for fresh torments and death.

The soldiers returned and demanded money of the priests. Each one gave what he had. But the soldiers, believing that treasure was hidden in the fortress and churches tormented one of the priests in order to compel him to discover it. When, however, they could find nothing from him they fell upon the youngest parish priest of Gorkum, Nicholas Poppel.

This holy man had been a faithful help to the aged Leonard Wecchel, whom he had waited upon as though he had been a servant. He was most especially devoted to the honour of the Most Holy Sacrament, and could not bear that he should not be proved guilty of adoration and devotion to it. Thereupon it seemed to him as though God would recompense this zeal by permitting him a martyr's death for the truth of the Most Holy Sacrament. When the inhabitants of the city fled into the castle, he, foreseeing his death, put on his best clothes, whilst every one asked, 'Father, it appears as though you were preparing for some great feast.' 'Yes,' replied he, 'it is just so; and, please God, I desire to be worthy of the grace of dying for the honour of the Blessed Sacrament.'

Now this God-loving priest is given over to the mad fury of the soldiers. They place him in their midst, hold him fast, and, holding pistols to his head, they cry, 'Now, parson, where is thy vain boasting with which thou hast glorified thyself, saying that willingly thou wouldst



give body and life for thy faith? Say now, art thou prepared to subscribe thy teaching with thy blood?' 'Freely,' replied he, in a clear voice, 'will I lay down my life for the one true Catholic faith, and above all for that divine truth that in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, under the form of bread and wine, Jesus Christ is truly present in His divinity and in His perfect humanity.' After this, this noble witness, this hero for the faith, doubted not for a moment that his last hour was come; but the soldier who held the pistol fired it not. The crown was yet to be won by a longer martyrdom. The soldiers took from the nearest Franciscan a girdle, and tied it round his neck, throwing the other end over the door of the prison; then swung him up and down until he fell into a deadly faint. After a time he came to himself, but round his neck remained the red mark until he went to his death.

This was the commencement of a long detail of horrors committed upon the noble little band of martyrs until the appointed end.

The surgeon of Gorkum, to whom permission had been given to attend to the wounds which the martyrs received during their confession, was so much struck with their patience and endurance that he begged leave to remain with them in prison, in order to give them all the relief which lay in the power of his skill. When he saw the father of the Franciscans so roughly handled he wept for sorrow; but the guardian replied, 'That which I have suffered for the faith I hold as nothing in comparison with that which Jesus suffered for our salvation, and I am ready with more terrible martyrdom to suffer death in order to testify to the truth. I am ready to be torn asunder and to be cut in pieces for the holy Catholic faith.'

When night was past, a band of Calvinists appeared in the prison to renew their violence. They bound the Franciscans two and two, and sent them forth in procession, saying, 'Sing now as ye are wont in your processions, for you are on the way to the gallows.' And all this was done amidst blows and imprecations. A Calvinist gave one of them a cup with dice in it, saying, 'Let every one cast in order to see who amongst you shall die first.'

In the mean time a magistrate of the city had sent a messenger to the Prince of Orange in order to beg for the liberty of the prisoners. Thereupon William Count de la Mark, a renegade Catholic who had joined the Calvinists, and who was a determined enemy to all priests, ordered the prisoners to be conducted to Brill, being afraid to put them to death in Gorkum. Arrived at Brill they were brought before the cruel De la Mark. When he saw the venerable priests in such a woful condition, he burst into a horrible laugh. The confessors were bound together two and two by their arms, and into the hands of the youngest Franciscan brother they thrust a banner which had been stolen out of a church, and made him proceed in front. Then they followed in procession three times round the spot where the gallows were erected on the banks of the Maas, receiving all the time kicks and blows from the cowardly soldiers, whilst the Calvinist people cried out, 'Behold your church! Go sing and read Mass, and perform all the obligations of your idolatry!' Then they began to go round the gallows singing the *Salve Regina* and other hymns, whilst the executioner placed the ladder against the gallows, and made every preparation, so that the priests believed their last hour to have arrived. But all was only so arranged, in order if possible to fill them with dread and anguish.

Then the Margrave, who enjoyed this melancholy spectacle, commanded the executioner to take the banner; the poor prisoners in couples followed him into the city of Brill; but from the lips of those martyred clergy, half naked, covered with a few tattered garments, full of wounds, bowed down with fatigue, and suffering hunger and thirst, rose at once the *Te Deum*; then the soldiers and the people infuriated fell upon them with greater violence than ever, causing them to cease their hymns of victory. Being come into the town they were brought into the market-place, where another gallows had been erected in haste, and amidst scorn and execrations they were once more thrown into a noisome prison.

The last evening of their lives seven of the most considerable priests were, for the last time, called to trial, it being believed that if they could be shaken the others would easily follow. At this trial De la Mark, two Calvinist preachers, and other persons of distinction were present. The two points upon which apostasy was required were: The belief in the Pope as the visible head of the Church, and that in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Every artifice, every threat, was employed, but to no purpose, and when it was clear

that no apostasy was to be expected of them, with revilings and insults the judges exclaimed, ‘To the gallows! At once! Away with them to the gallows!’

The Count, who was highly displeased at the failure of the Calvinist preachers to confute the Catholic priests, ordered them now to be sent back to prison.

In the mean time the messenger of the magistrates of Gorkum to the Prince of Orange had returned with the command that the priests should be liberated and sent back to their different posts. The Count heeded, however, not this command, but in a state of savage drunkenness at eleven o’clock at night gave orders that the whole number of the ecclesiastics should be taken to the gallows. At one o’clock in the morning, being again bound two and two, they were driven to a ruined monastery which the Count had plundered and set on fire. Here was found a half-burnt turf hut. Two pieces of timber which the fire had spared were therefore made use of as gallows.

It was on the 9th July 1572 when the execution of the pious sufferers began. On their side they had fully prepared themselves for it by confession and prayer. The executioner went so slowly to work that two hours had elapsed ere the last of the martyrs had taken his place on the gallows, and many of them still lived when morning broke. But the fury of the soldiers was not yet satisfied. They mutilated the dead bodies, cut off their noses and ears, and other limbs, and, alas, shame seems to touch the pen with which we write, bound them to their hats, and returned with these melancholy trophies in triumph into the city! The Catholics of Gorkum received permission to inter the bodies of the nineteen martyrs in the aforementioned turf hut. Later on their remains were brought into the Catholic Netherlands. Their names were entered among the number of the blessed by Pope Clement X., and their canonisation has fallen to the lot of our present Holy Father Pius IX.

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA.

A.D. 1572.

In the process of his canonisation it was proved as a continual miracle, with regard to this great Saint, that he never entered any church without having an interior consciousness of the place where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, even although the customary lamp were not burning before it. Whenever he had opportunity he visited the Blessed Sacrament in the churches; and, above all, wherever he established himself he would always contrive to take a room which adjoined the church, whether it was a fine apartment or only a poor cottager’s attic. There he dwelt as though in the presence of his Lord, and there he prayed and meditated with his face turned towards the church, where our Lord dwelt in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

The continual and protracted illnesses which this holy servant of God had to suffer were, as he says himself, a source of consolation rather than affliction, for being entirely free from all the duties of his office, it was therefore in his power to raise his heart to God many hours during the day. Of these he spent several in preparation for Holy Communion, which he received of course daily.

On this subject it pleased God to give him a wonderful grace as a consolation to his soul

Once (so writes Father Louis von Guzmann, himself a very holy man) it was his happiness to



render some assistance to the Saint during a very severe illness. The sickness had this peculiarity in it that he continually fell into a lethargy which deprived him of all sense of feeling, although it was attempted by tormenting him to bring him to his senses. Notwithstanding this, every morning there were two hours in which he was awake and cheerful, as though he were in good health. Of these he employed one in preparation before Holy Communion, and the other in thanksgiving after it, after which he sank again into his deathly lethargy, which lasted the whole day until the usual hours of the following morning.

Usually, when still a layman, the Saint spent three days in preparation and three days in thanksgiving after Holy Communion, which may be the more easily understood when we learn that such were the rapture and divine union which took place in his soul when occupied, as a priest, in the sacred mysteries, that he would frequently commence in the morn-

ing and Vespers would find him with the Holy Sacrifice still unfinished, so that he seldom on this account offered it up in public.

ST. TERESA.

A.D. 1582.

St. Teresa, who is well known as the most marvellous, and perhaps the most favoured, of contemplative Saints, found her ecstatic devotion raised to the highest pitch when united to God in Holy Communion. For a period of twenty-three years, by the direction of the most learned men and the permission of her confessors, she received it daily. Her belief in the Real Presence became at length so perfect that for many years she never approached the table of the Lord without seeing Christ therein with her bodily eyes. She would smile when she

heard any one express a wish to have lived at the time when our Lord was upon earth ; since seeing Him so truly in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar she herself felt that there was nothing more to be desired.

But St. Teresa taught, by her example, that conformity to the will of God is a sacrifice far more pleasing to Him than daily Communion. On one occasion, at Avila, she was prevented by a severe fit of illness from receiving the Blessed Sacrament for an entire month. On being asked whether she did not vehemently desire it, after being so long deprived of it, she replied, 'By no means ; for the consideration that it has come to pass by the ordering of the will of God satisfies my soul as much as if I received the divine food daily.'

St. Teresa longed ardently for Holy Communion. But in this,' says she, 'I perceive the possibility of a great admixture of self-love as it has happened to myself. For when I have communicated, and the Host within me hath nearly passed away, I have wished the moment back again, and that I had even yet to communicate, so that I might be able to communicate yet again. And because it thus frequently happened to me, I remarked at last that this sprung rather from self-love than from the love of God. For when we receive Holy Communion we generally find in it sweetness and consolation with which we are delighted ; . . . and thus I acknowledged at last that I sought nothing else but the sweetness of receiving.' The Saint, upon this subject, relates the following remarkable story :

'I remember, in a place near one of our foundations, to have known a certain woman who bore the character of being a great servant of God, and who without doubt was such. She



ST. TERESA SEEN BY HER SISTERS IN RAPTURE IN THE CONVENT OF AVILA.

communicated daily, but without having any particular confessor, sometimes going to one, sometimes to another church to Holy Communion. This I remarked, and I should have been better pleased had she been under the guidance of one director than that she should communicate so often, depending only on her own caprice. She dwelt in a house by herself, and did whatever seemed good to herself; and all was indeed good, for she was a pious person. I often told her my opinion on the subject, but she gave little heed, which was very reasonable, for she was far better than I; nevertheless I did not believe that therein I erred. . . . At length she fell into mortal sickness, and she obtained permission for Holy Mass to be said in her house, and thus she continued to receive the Most Holy Sacrament daily.

‘But because this sickness continued rather long it appeared unreasonable to a certain priest (who was a great servant of God, and who frequently said Holy Mass in her house) that she should communicate daily at home; and indeed this must have been a temptation, for this scruple happened on the very day that she died. Now when she saw that the Mass was ended without Holy Communion having been given to her, she became furious with the priest and immediately expired. Whether she had confessed before or not, I know not. The priest, who was very much distressed, came immediately and related it to me, and it can easily be believed how grieved I was to hear it.

‘But I was more convinced than ever how dangerous a thing it is for one in such matters to follow his *own will*; for whoso approaches the table of the Lord must be perfectly convinced of his unworthiness, and must not dare to do it by his own opinion; but what is wanting on our parts in worthiness is supplied only by *obedience* to him who has authority.’

Out of her great love and reverence for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, St. Teresa felt a certain joy when she perceived that the Hosts were large, because, apparently under the form of bread, Jesus Himself lingered with her for a greater length of time. Once St. John of the Cross happened to communicate her; but instead of giving her an entire Host he divided it between her and another sister. This he did, not for lack of Hosts, but because, knowing this thought in her mind (for she had told him of it), he desired to extinguish it. ‘Thus I knew,’ says the Saint, ‘that it is of no consequence whether the Hosts are little or great, because Christ is present under the very smallest particle.’ And when she had received Holy Communion our Lord said to her, ‘Fear not, My daughter, that any one can separate thee from ME!’ ‘Therewith He gave me to understand,’ continues the Saint, ‘that it was a matter of small consequence’ (the size of the Host).

During the time that Teresa dwelt in a convent at Avila she usually fell into an ecstasy after receiving Holy Communion, and often on the spot where she had been communicated, so that it was necessary for others to lead her back to her place. At Toledo it happened that she was discovered by the portress in this state; she was standing against a wall like a statue, fixed and apparently lifeless. The portress endeavoured with all her strength to force her to sit, and took her by the hands, but she was as a stone, until she came to herself. At Avila on the feast of St. Joseph, when she tarried after Communion in the choir, she was seen by the sisters lifted up in the air. In the year 1582, on the 18th of April, she had founded her last convent at Burgos. It was her wish to journey from Burgos to Avila in order to end her days there, but obedience called her to that of Alba on her way. Here she was overtaken by her last sickness; and three days before her death she passed a whole night in prayer, during

which the Lord foretold her the near approach of her dissolution. During the whole time of her illness she conversed with her daughters in such a wonderful manner of the love of God that in listening to her they forgot their own grief. At five o'clock in the evening of the 3d October she begged for the Holy Viaticum. Then she exhorted her daughters with motherly zeal to cultivate peace, sisterly love, poverty, and obedience. After which the Most Holy was brought to her.

As soon as it was carried into her cell, the servant of God sprang up out of bed, although before she had been too weak to move without help. Her countenance was overspread with unearthly and majestic beauty, and she appeared much younger than she really was. With folded hands and overflowing with joy, feeling within her that her end approached, she raised her voice in glowing words of love: 'O my Lord, my Bridegroom, that the much and long desired hour might be come, that the time might be come when we shall see each other face to face! O that it might be time to go! Lord, bless the journey! Thy will be done! At length is the time arrived when I shall leave my banishment, and my soul shall taste Thy presence, which it has so long desired!' After receiving the Most Holy with the deepest devotion she remained for some time absorbed in contemplation, during which she often repeated the verses of the fiftieth Psalm, 'An offering before God is a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart Thou, O God, wilt not despise. Cast me not from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. A clean heart create in me, O God!' Until the morning of the 4th October she suffered the severest pains, but to the last moment of her life her face shone with heavenly beauty, her body retained its peaceful calm appearance, and it was as though her soul were floating in contemplation. Her departure was not the death of an ordinary person. Holy Church has decided, during the process of her canonisation, that Teresa died rather of the overpowering fire of divine love than of any natural sickness. Her heart was kept at Alva, enclosed in a crystal case, in which a wound is clearly visible; from which token it was concluded that a seraph had touched her heart, in such a manner that it was an overflow of divine love which had separated her soul from her body.

PUNISHMENT OF A MAIDEN WHO RECEIVED HOLY COMMUNION NOT FASTING.

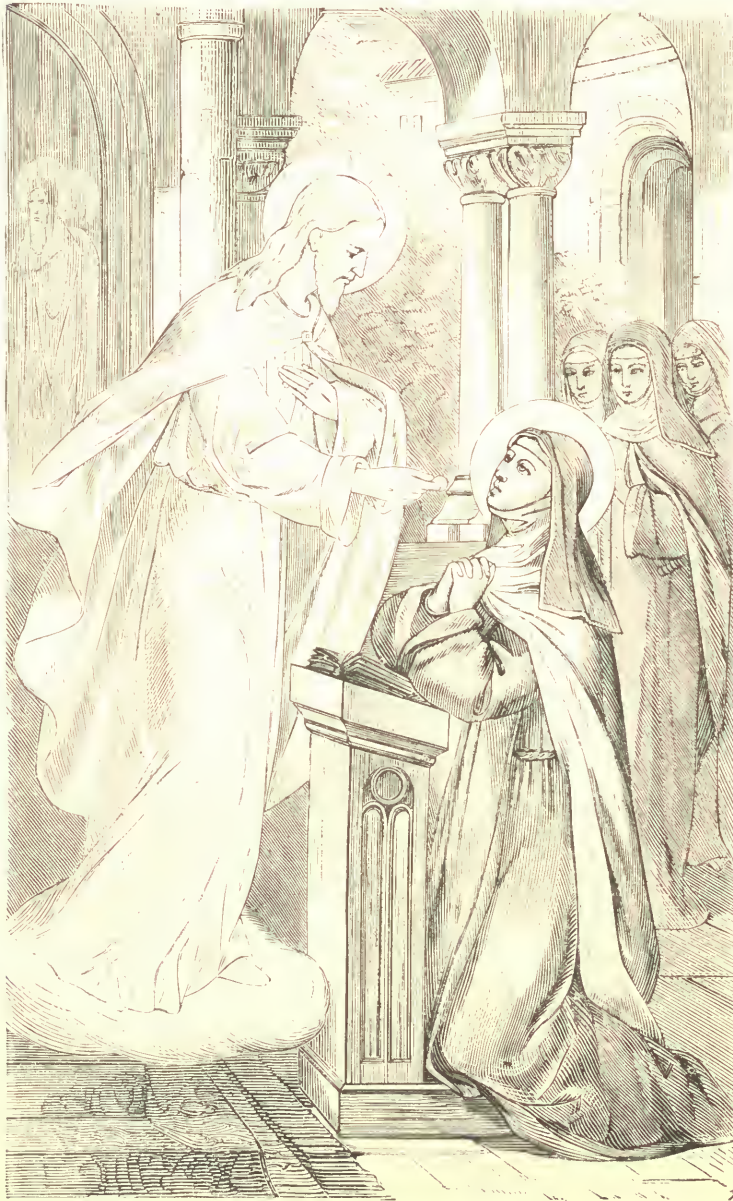
A.D. 1584.

In the year 1584 there lived a maiden who had brought herself to swear that she would dare to make her Easter Communion in direct opposition to the commands of the Church, without previous fasting. On that very day she became possessed by a devil, and for many months suffered agonies of pain. She was as though fastened down to her bed, deprived of necessities of every kind, resembling rather a log of wood than a human being. She saw and heard nothing, foamed, gnashed with her teeth, and was constantly thrown into very fearful convulsions. The most dreadful circumstance was this, that the evil spirit often would drag her into some hidden corner, now in the upper part of the house, now in the lower. Sometimes she was found in the garden hanging to a tree, sometimes lying on the roof half suffocated, sometimes with an enormous stone lying on her breast, her nose and mouth stopped up, and at the point of death.

Her father, full of fear and anguish, sought help at the hands of a priest. Publicly, in the

churches, in the religious houses, and in the schools, were prayers offered up for the wretched girl. The priest blessed the house, and in the girl's bedroom crucifixes were hung up, relics were hung round her neck, and the whole family fasted for three days; in short, everything was done to appease the anger of God and to obtain His help. But all was of no avail. One day the girl was found concealed in a dark corner; soon after she crawled out of a thorn-hedge more enraged than ever. She threw away the holy water, tore down the holy images, and cast off the relics from her with howlings and frightful gnashings of teeth. Nothing was

more fearful than the appearance of this girl, who despised every holy means of cure. Then the thought occurred to bring her to the neighbouring church of Hilsburg, where a relic of the holy Archbishop Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, was enshrined. The magistrate of the town led the girl to the spot. Hardly had she entered the church when the power of Satan was broken, and the maiden was healed.



ST. MARY MAGDALEN OF PAZZI COMMUNICATED BY OUR LORD.

ST. MARY MAGDALEN OF PAZZI.

A.D. 1585.

On three different occasions it was apparent during her ecstasies that this Saint received Holy Communion from the hands of our Lord Himself. It was Maundy Thursday of the year 1585 when this happened for the first time. She was then nineteen years of age, and, having already entered her novitiate, was chosen to take part in the suffering life of our Lord. In her ecstasy she followed the whole story of the Passion, and when she had come to the consideration of the Last Supper, and contemplated our Lord in-

stituting the Most Adorable Sacrament, she took the position of a communicant, and with the greatest devotion opened and shut her mouth, pressing her hands against her bosom, by which signs it appeared that she had eaten something. ‘My Beloved is white and ruddy,’ she exclaimed; ‘He is come into my heart. Enlarge my heart, that it may exclude every creature, in order that it may be united to Thy Flesh and Thy Blood.’ When she came out of her ecstasy, she revealed to the sisters who had remarked what had passed that from the hands of the Saviour she had received Holy Communion with overflowing joy.

The second time this miraculous occurrence took place was on the 7th of August of the same year, on the feast of St. Albert of the Order of Carmelites. When she had said the words, ‘Lord, I am not worthy,’ she opened her mouth and held a long colloquy with the Saviour. When she came to herself, she revealed that she had just received Communion at the hands of our Divine Redeemer. The third time it happened was on Maundy Thursday 1592, when, as on the first occasion, she fell into an ecstasy in contemplating the suffering life of our Lord.

BROTHER DEO GRATIAS, ST. FELIX OF CANTALICE.

A.D. 1587.

A pious countryman and his wife, living at the little town of Cantalice in the duchy of Spoleto, in Italy, were the parents of St. Felix. In his childhood he tended their herds of cattle. This occupation, which is fraught with so much danger to children, by being the occasion of their missing church and school, was harmless for him. His parents loved God, and gave themselves earnestly to prayer, and little Felix did the same. Wherever he found a lonely place there would the pious child fall on his knees, and, crossing his hands over his breast, would repeat the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*. This life continued until he was twelve years of age, when his father placed him in the service of a rich citizen of Cittaducale, whom he faithfully served for eighteen years. At first he was only the cowherd, but he afterwards learned and followed the occupation of field-labourer. He was an enemy to idleness, lying, and swearing; he was always gentle and peaceable, even when disturbed; and did any one treat him injuriously he would generally say, ‘Now, my friend, thou art indeed dear to me; God willeth to make a saint of thee.’ Did he ever hear any one swear, he would cry out to such a one at once, saying, ‘Unhappy one, what doest thou? Go quickly and confess, and pray God that He may forgive thee this thy great sin.’

Great was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Passion of our Lord. His master could not give him a greater joy than by permitting him to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It also happened to him as it happened to St. Isidor, that during his absence in assisting at Mass angels would work in the fields in his stead. Ignorant of reading and writing, he paid great heed when holy books were read out in his presence. Now, when for the first time he heard of the blessed lives of the fathers of the desert, he thought over it, and desired at once to imitate their virtues and severe penances. But not knowing how he could contrive to lead a solitary life like the ancient fathers of the desert, he took the resolution of entering the Order of Capuchins, which in the town of Cittaducale carried out a very penitential rule. One of his relations being desirous, at any price, of altering his

determination, he answered simply, 'Knowest thou I will do this thing in earnest and fulfil it entirely, or I would not begin it at all.'

Felix, with equal outspokenness, addressed himself to the F. Guardian upon the subject of his wishes, and begged that he might be received. But he, in order to prove him, rejected him contemptuously. Felix, however, undiscouraged, replied, 'God is my witness, father,



that I am come on this account simply that I may serve Him more perfectly, and make a more entire offering of myself to Him; and when the guardian conducted him into the church, and, pointing to a crucifix covered with wounds and blood, said, 'See, young man, how much Christ has suffered for us,' he burst into tears. The experienced father then perceived that it was a true vocation; and Felix, to his great joy, was received on probation. At once, as a novice, he was a pattern of the most illustrious virtues—humility, obedience, recollection, order, and diligence. He was a strongly built man, and from his youth up accustomed to hard work; blameless in his whole life, and so edifying in words and deeds that his superiors appointed him as alms-gatherer to the monastery. This arduous duty he fulfilled for forty years, even until his death.

Now Felix led the life of a hermit in the great city of Rome and in daily intercourse with men. He preserved in the midst of men of all conditions a constant recol-

lection and purity of heart, and in his daily wanderings through the city he was always so retiring and modest that it was truly said of him, that although his body might be in the street, his spirit was with God.

In his humility he was never known to speak of himself as a brother, but would say, 'I dwell with the Capuchins.' When he desired to pass through a crowd, with his great flagon, in which he collected wine, and his heavily-laden sack, he would humbly beg in the following words: 'For charity's sake, friend, a little place for the ass of the Capuchin monastery, in order

that he may pass along with his burden.' He was never known to complain of his work, never showed sign of fatigue when it was occasion to do a service to another. He found no pleasure in going out; his poor little cell had become most dear to him, and brotherly love and obedience alone took him abroad.

Once Brother Felix found himself in presence of the learned Don Andreas Martini, and remarking the innumerable books which were arrayed against the walls of the room, he pointed to a crucifix, and said to Don Andreas, 'See, Sir Doctor; all these books are written in order that we may the better understand *that one*.' To another gentleman he showed a crucifix, with these words: 'This is indeed the whole Commandments of God in one book!'

The time which his arduous duties spared him was spent mostly in meditation in the church. As he had not sufficient opportunity by day for this holy occupation he spent a great part of the night in prayer. At the beginning of the night, when, according to the Roman custom, the bells are rung for the *Angelus*, Felix went to his cell and slept a little. In the second hour of the night he arose in order to pour out his heart before God. This occupied him till midnight, when he rang the bell for the brethren to attend choir. Then he rested in his cell whilst the fathers said the office in choir; for he thought he might suspend his prayer whilst Jesus was not alone in the Blessed Sacrament. When Matins were over Felix reappeared, instead of those who had returned to their cells, in order to watch before the Blessed Sacrament until break of day, when he again rung the *Angelus*. Then he served the first Mass, which was said daily at that hour, and at which, with the greatest devotion and many tears, he received Holy Communion. His compunction and feeling were so great that it was with difficulty he could repeat the *Confiteor*; he could not succeed in suppressing his tears, and it was yet more difficult for him to say the *Non sum dignus*.

On this account he inquired of a distinguished preacher of the Order whether it were necessary for a communicant to repeat these last words; and when he found it was not so, his heart was set at ease upon this scruple.

After Communion, until the hour when it was necessary for him to go out alms-gathering, he continued his thanksgiving; and then with holy zeal he took up his flagon and lag, and throughout the day his soul was occupied in recollection and acts of the love of God, as we may gather from the wonderfully beautiful hymns which he composed. One of them, which he often sung at the request of good men, runs as follows:

'Jesus, sweetest Guest of mine!
Source of charity divine!
O, I love Thee, and on fire
Is my heart with strong desire.
Jesus, O my sweetest Love!
Since Thy precious gifts I prove,

On my heart and on my side
Write Thyself, O Crucified!
Write the love which loveth me,
Write the cross which tortured Thee,
Write the greatness of Thy pain
Till it throbs with love again.

Unto Thee with strength I cry,
After Thee I thirsting sigh;

I am sick for love of Thee;
 O my Love, remember me;
 O my Jesus, from above,
 Hear me weeping out my love!
 Jesus, sweetest Love of mine'
 See, my heart hath flown to Thee,
 Therein by Thy tender grace
 Would it make its resting-place;
 There, in everlasting rest,
 Loving each, by each possess'd,
 As 'mid perfume of sweet roses,
 Lo, my soul on Thee reposes.
 Jesus, Son of Maiden Mother,
 Of souls that love the Hope and Brother,
 End and goal of every one!
 O, how rich that heart must be
 Who possesseth only Thee.
 Who embraceth Thee alone!
 Jesus, joy of angel-choirs,
 Who tasteth Thee hath no desires,
 Nothing needeth earth can give.
 Lo, in Thee is all possess'd,
 And the soul, supremely bless'd,
 Sure a heavenly life must live.'

The circumstances of his inward prayer, and the fire of devotion which glowed in his heart, as well as the graces which were poured upon him, reveal that he, in those solitary night-watches which he spent in church with God and His holy angels, treated of great and divine things. We know but little of all this; for the Saint carefully concealed the graces he received; but some of the brethren who watched him relate the following: 'The first thing that Felix did when he entered the church in the dead of night was to clean the lamp before the altar, that it might burn the brighter. Then with a lighted taper he went all round the church, in order to be assured that all the brothers had left; after which he stationed himself before the altar, and his contemplation began. Once, with arms extended crosswise, he stood in the midst of the church, and began aloud to pray, 'Lord, I commend to Thee this people, and I commend to Thee these well-doers! . . . Compassion for sinners!' At these last words Felix began to weep, and continued weeping for about a quarter of an hour, when he recovered his tranquillity, and for two hours remained in the same position without moving. After a time, as he so prayed, a deep melancholy would settle upon his face, when suddenly, as if rapt with divine love, he would break out into glad jubilation. Then, as one beside himself, he would kneel on a bench, and, moving his hands as though he were playing upon the organ, he would raise his voice in sweetest song, saying, 'O Domine! O Domine!' Then would he give way to the thankful expressions of his heart, and in a loud voice praise God.

His heart was so full of the love of Jesus that the Most Holy Name was constantly in his mouth; but most joyous was he when he could hear it uttered by the lips of little children. He would call them together in the very streets of Rome, and say, 'Dear children, say *Jesus*; let all of you say *Jesus* once;' and his heart was stirred to hear such a children's chorus uttering the holy name of our Redeemer.

His greeting always was, 'Deo gratias.' This word was so often on his lips that the

children whom he had taught to say it would, when he was an old man, joyously cry on seeing him, 'Deo gratias!' whereat he would answer sweetly, as he approached them, 'Deo gratias, my dear children! Deo gratias! God bless you all! Deo gratias!' So that he was called by the brethren *Deo gratias*, as though it were his own name.

Felix was now over seventy years of age; and it so happened that one night Brother Lupus secreted himself in the church. Felix, according to his custom, had spent a long time in contemplation, when Lupus observed by the light of the altar-lamp that he was very highly moved; and, arising suddenly, he approached the high altar, and there stood still. Then the brother heard how Felix, with words of burning love, besought the Mother of God to place her most sweet Child for a little while in his arms. When, behold the Divine Mother appeared with the Infant Jesus, and granted his request! He received Him in his arms with the greatest reverence, pressed Him with devotion to his heart, and shed abundant tears. This lasted for some little time, when the vision disappeared, but Felix remained kneeling before the altar.

And now grew more and more excessive his ardent longing to go to the God whom he so unspeakably loved. And the appointed hour drew nigh. Often was he heard to say, 'The ass faileth, he is altogether done for.' When the Father Guardian met him one day in the sleeping-room, and asked him what he did, 'I seek death,' was his reply. Soon after, 'Now is the old ass broken down, and will never rise again.' In truth Felix knew that his end approached, and the last Sacraments were brought him. As the priest presented to him the Sacred Host with the words, 'Brother Felix, behold thy God and Master, who is come to visit thee,' he raised his hands, and with a loud voice repeated the antiphon, *O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria ejus et future glorie nobis pignus datur*. A little while after receiving the Host, Felix prayed the brethren who stood by once more to say 'Deo gratias!' for him; and whilst they obeyed this his last wish, he slept sweetly in Jesus on the 18th May 1587.

LOVE FOR THE BLESSED SACRAMENT REWARDED BY A MIRACULOUS CONVERSION.

A.D. 1590.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century there lived in Naples a nobleman, by name Horatio Grannopoli, who made it his constant care and duty to promote the honour and adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. A portion of his patrimony he devoted to the erection of beautiful altars and the adornment of the tabernacle. It was with pain that he observed how in many parish churches the King of Heaven was allowed to abide in dwellings all unbefitting the Divine Majesty, and that He was so often carried to the sick without suitable state. He did not hesitate to beg from door to door in order to collect a sufficient amount of capital, the interest of which should furnish all these poor churches with befitting ornaments and wax candles. Unmindful of his high birth, with but the honour and glory of God in view, he traversed the whole city. Great personages, bankers, captains, received his visit, and his first words invariably were, 'Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament!' Then he begged an alms for the altars of our ever-present Lord in His poor churches. In this manner he collected a considerable sum together.

One morning, as he was leaving the church of St. Joseph, he observed a well-dressed man of noble appearance, who was quite a stranger to him, step out from a neighbouring palace. At once he accosted him, and begged of him an alms in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, as he had begged others. But the nobleman, struck with astonishment, replied with a mocking smile, 'It is a mistake, my friend; I am an Englishman, and my name is Thomas Acton. The religion I observe is not the same as thine, and I shall take good heed that no alms of mine shall be used for the worship of a piece of bread.' Full of tender compassion, Grannopoli bowed to the Englishman and departed. But the latter, calling him back, begged that he would not feel pained by his reply, assuring him that he was struck by the splendour and beauty of the processions, but that it was beyond his power to believe in a God present in the Host. Then he presented him with a purse containing fifteen dollars, with the signification that this should not be spent in the glorification of the Blessed Sacrament, but should be employed in supplying his own necessities.

Grannopoli took the money with thanks, but remained in doubt whether or not he might apply this sum to his pious purpose. He consulted therefore the Cardinal Archbishop Cantelini, who gave him the necessary permission, saying at the same time, 'Let us pray our Lord that this alms may obtain for him light and the gift of conversion.'

A full year had passed by when the Englishman was taken ill of a fever, and brought to death's door. One morning this news reached the ears of Grannopoli as he was accompanying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick. At once he recalled to mind the generosity of the man, and how his gift had been employed in the glorification of the Blessed Sacrament. Full of confidence in the compassion of our Lord, he betook himself to the parish priest of St. Joseph's, in whose parish the sick Englishman lay, begging him for love of God to attempt the conversion of this poor heretic. The parish priest was willing, but first took counsel of the Archbishop, who not merely permitted, but commanded him to make use of every means to draw him into the Catholic Church. After many difficulties he succeeded in making his way to the bedside of the dying man; but success did not attend his steps. 'I know well,' said the sick man, 'that you desire to have my body after my death, in order that you may bury it and be well paid for doing so. But you are mistaken; you will never gain me over. In the English Church I have lived, and in the English Church I will die.' The good priest replied, 'I have no interest but in the salvation of your soul. The Catholic faith alone is true and necessary for the saving of your soul; without it you are lost.' Then he placed before him reasons for his consideration; but all in vain. The poor heretic gave little heed and no weight to all his reasoning, and the priest left him with little hope.

In the mean time the sick man became daily weaker and his death nearer. One day he fell into a deadly faint, and for hours showed no signs of life. Full of grief, the good priest had given him up for lost, when, contrary to all expectation, the dying man rallied, and sent for him. As soon as he entered the room, 'Sir Priest,' said he, 'I am resolved to follow your advice. I desire to be a Catholic; and if I die, as I expect, I wish to be buried in your church of St. Joseph.' Surprised and overjoyed at this sudden change, the servant of God lost no time in teaching the sick man the most prominent mysteries of the faith and in receiving him into the Catholic Church. He confessed and received absolution. After which he begged the priest for Holy Communion in these words: 'Now I believe with my whole

heart in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and I regret that I so long rejected this belief; nevertheless I have this consolation, that I have never caused at any time an injury to the Most Holy Sacrament.' With deep devotion and lively faith he then received Holy Communion.

Thomas Acton lived some hours longer in the full use of his faculties. His longing desire for Holy Communion revealed to others that something extraordinary had taken place in him. The parish priest begged him therefore to disclose this last secret. The sick man replied, 'At the moment when I sank into a faint I saw through the window of my room an angel appear before me, with what seemed to me to be a note of debt in his hand. A second angel followed him with a bouquet of most lovely flowers, which he gave into my hand with these words: "If thou wouldst enjoy true happiness, thou must enter the Catholic Church." Now I understood that the note of debt referred to the fifteen dollars which I one day gave as an alms, and without the least intention of doing honour to the Blessed Sacrament; I understood further that those pieces of money which I had given with a good heart were represented by those flowers, which flowers were a loving invitation to me to enter the blooming pastures of Paradise. My resolve was taken; and I promised God without delay to become a Catholic.' So spake the dying Thomas Acton, his words being often broken by acts of contrition, desire for heaven, and love of God. In these pious dispositions he gave up the ghost.

THE CATECHISM OF PETER CANISIUS.

A.D. 1590.

Peter Canisius, or Canis, who is renowned through a great part of the Catholic world by means of his Catechism, was raised up at the moment when Germany stood in the greatest danger of being torn from the bosom of the Church, not only to preserve the light of faith from being extinguished, but to make it shine with greater lustre.

Peter Canis was born in Nymwegen, a city of Holland, in the same month of the same year (8th May 1521) in which St. Ignatius resolved to devote himself to the service of God. From a child he was drawn to God, tarrying in the churches with extraordinary willingness. Upon this subject he himself relates an occurrence which disclosed the interior guidance of Heaven.

'I was a boy,' says he, 'when I was one day praying in St. Stephen's Church at Nymwegen. Near the high altar I adored upon my knees Thy Most Holy Body, O my Lord! Never can I forget the grace which Thou didst bestow upon me when but a child. For, full of anxiety, and not without tears as I believe, I cried to Thee, and made known to Thee my desire; for already I foresaw—I know not how—that the perversity, vanity, and folly of the world, and its innumerable dangers, would hinder my salvation; the snares also which everywhere are spread, and which but few, it appeared to me, were able to escape. Therefore did I pray for Thy assistance in danger, and I believe that I uttered these very words: "Show me Thy ways, O Lord, and teach me Thy paths. Lead me into Thy Truth and learn me, for Thou art my God and my Saviour."'

As he grew towards manhood he became acquainted with Father Peter Faber, then a

young disciple of St. Ignatius, and through his spiritual influence he was drawn to the Order, and became afterwards a Jesuit priest.

Now at this time the Lutheran heresies had found their way into Cologne, so that even Archbishop Hermann was infected by them, and he also endeavoured to withdraw the clergy and laity from their allegiance to the Church. All true-hearted Catholics, however, and



PETER CANISIUS WRITING HIS CATECHISM.

amongst them Peter Canis, withstood him with all their power. This undaunted priest preached the unadulterated faith from various pulpits with such success that it was in a great measure owing to him that the complications which heresy had occasioned in Cologne became disentangled.

In 1545, Pope Paul III. assembled the General Council to meet at Trent, in order to raise a wall of defence against the encroachments of error. Peter Canis, together with many companions of his Order, were called to attend it; and when, on account of the breaking out of war, the Council was broken up, St. Ignatius called him to Rome, where he underwent a hard novitiate in the school of that Saint. From thence he journeyed into Sicily, in order to teach rhetoric in the Jesuit schools, and on his return to Rome he took the solemn vows; thence again, accompanied by many religious, he went to Ingoldstadt, where he held lectures in the university. He soon gained

great influence over the minds of the youth, leading them on to a love of prayer, visiting churches, and to the public worship of God. Being himself a man of prayer, he never failed in his discourses to insist upon the infinite necessity of prayer; and seeing the impossibility of that man praying heartily and meritoriously who does not firmly hold with living faith all that Holy Church teaches, he compiled a

beautiful prayer-book in the German language, with which he prefaced his little Catechism. In this prayer-book there is an instruction upon the Most Holy Sacrament in the form of eighteen questions, in which appears plainly how impressed this holy teacher of God must have been with the necessity of firm undoubting belief in the Most Holy Sacrament.

The questions are in the following order; the answers are too lengthy for insertion here:

1. Must we not consider the Sacrament of the Altar as a most great and high mystery?
2. What are we, above all, to believe of this Sacrament?
3. Doth, then, nothing great and miraculous take place in this Sacrament?
4. But in what manner should a man bear himself in presence of a thing so great and wonderful as that which takes place in this Sacrament?
5. What doth Holy Church believe, teach, and hold concerning this Most Holy Sacrament?
6. Hath not Christ the Lord commanded how this Sacrament is to be received?
7. How do men most generally sin with regard to receiving this Most Holy Sacrament?
8. Why should a man not neglect to receive this Sacrament?
9. Should this Sacrament be received frequently?
10. Why is it dangerous to receive this Sacrament unworthily?
11. What is the fruit and use of a worthy Communion?
12. In what consists a worthy Communion?
13. What kind of faith must he have who desires to communicate worthily?
14. Is faith sufficient for a worthy Communion?
15. With what intention should we approach the Lord's Table?
16. What devotion is necessary for a worthy Communion?
17. What should be the external appearance of one who communicates?
18. What should be the external appearance of one after having communicated?

After the publication of the Catechism the name of blessed Peter Canisius became yet more famous. On all sides men crowded to him; on the one hand that he might check heresy, on the other that they might be strengthened by him in the Catholic faith. So the servant of God journeyed from Vienna into Bohemia, where, relying only on God, he founded a college at Prague in the very midst of the enemy; then to Ratisbon, where, for his staunch support of the faith and his many virtues, he was held in the very highest veneration; from thence he proceeded to Worms, where he, in a public discussion which he maintained with Melancthon, the friend of Martin Luther, and many of his colleagues, demonstrated with great clearness and conviction that the Holy Bible cannot be considered as the only judge in controversies of faith; that the sacred writings do not even interpret themselves; that an infallible teaching and ministry being in existence it is every man's duty to submit to it in matters of faith. He demonstrated this more than all in the contention which then was rife upon the subject of the Most Holy Sacrament. 'It is well known,' said he, amongst other things, 'what is written, "This is My Body." Nevertheless there is great strife amongst the heretics as to the meaning of these words. Did the Sacred Scriptures suffice to adjust these differences there would soon be an end of them; but, as it is, each party plumes himself upon the sacred writings.'

When it pleased our Lord to call His servant to Himself, Peter Canisius received the Viaticum in presence of all the brethren. As he was dying he yet murmured, 'Lord, I am not

worthy;' and after receiving his Heavenly Guest he lay many hours motionless, absorbed in prayer. Then being anointed with the holy oils he kissed his crucifix for the last time, and gently breathed out his pure soul on the 21st December 1597.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

A.D. 1591.

It was in the August of the year 1567 that St. Teresa came to Medina for the purpose of preparing a dilapidated house as a cloister for nuns. She had received authority from the General to found two reformed houses of men; and hearing of this pious young associated Carmelite, who was already attempting to conform his life according to the severe rules of the Order, she sent for him, and showed him how he was called by God to be the first instrument in that great work. For four years he had been associated with the Order, and was now completing his studies at the Convent of St. Anne previous to entering the priesthood. His dwelling was a small dark cell, his bed a simple piece of wood, his dress a rough penitent's dress; he slept but little, and his nourishment was of the slightest. All he possessed he had given to the poor, reserving nothing to himself but an old Breviary and a miserable garment. Thus his life was one of humility, devotion, and love of the Cross.

It was under obedience that he took the vows of the priesthood; but who dares describe the holy devotion with which he prepared himself to celebrate his first Mass? Before the awful words of consecration he paused, and with earnestness prayed for the grace to spend his life without mortal sin, and also for that of doing perfect penance for all that was past. When he raised the most holy Host after consecration, he heard in the deep of his soul a voice, which said, 'I grant thee what thou desirest of Me.' Upon this his heart rose full of thankful love towards his God and Master; and so great was the sense of his union with Christ that for a length of time he sought complete solitude, in which he entertained the desire to become a Carthusian, and thus entirely to die to the world. But such was not the will of God, for at this very time St. Teresa sent to entreat and invite him to assist her in founding a reformed monastery of men. He at once joyfully consented, and betook himself to the little village of Durrelo, where a nobleman had placed a poor house at the disposal of St. Teresa for the purpose.

Before making any beginning of his work John presented himself before the Blessed Sacrament in the parish church, in order to implore the blessing of God upon his new foundation. Then he hurried to the poor house, and with the help of an artisan began to put it in order. The entrance-hall was devoted to the chapel, and a high altar was placed at once in it. The walls were decorated with crosses, and under these skulls were arranged, in order to show the emptiness of all earthly things, and that true life is only to be found in the Cross. After arranging the church they made three little chambers, the centre one of which served as a choir, and the two side ones as little cells, in which there was scarcely room to kneel. One of these served him for a sleeping-place, the pillow of which was a stone, and the furniture a cross with a death's head. The furniture of the kitchen in the hinder part of the house consisted of two pots; that of the refectory of a board (which served as table), a cracked pitcher, and two hollow pumpkins.

On the following morning, when John arose from his wretched sleeping-place, he clothed himself in the rough new habit which Teresa had given him, girded himself with a leather girdle, and over all threw the capuce and the scapular. A white mantle without folds, which reached down to his knees, completed his dress. Under the habit he wore a coarse shirt; his feet were bare, he wore neither shoes nor sandals. Thus habited he threw himself before the altar of the new church, and made an offering of himself to God and the Blessed Virgin, praying for the grace of fidelity and perseverance. After two months Antony, Prior of the Carmelite Monastery at Medina, joined him, together with other brethren of the Order, who entertained the same desire of keeping the unmitigated rule. They lived like the hermits of old, to the great astonishment of the people. A very wonderful life of penance was that of John himself, who from this time took the title of John of the Cross. The Cross was his life, his joy, and his conversation; so that his preaching drew the hearts of many to the way of the Cross. And it came at length to pass that his conversions were not unfrequently crowned by miracles, and that the devils themselves fled from before his presence.

But when the reform began to take root the storm arose from the convents of the mitigated rule, and by their influence John was torn from his monastery at Avila, and thrown into prison. Here he lay in chains, in a dark, narrow, damp cell, for nine months; his food consisted of bread and water, and occasionally a fish. His well-worn habit was his only protection against the cold. Scarcely sufficient light was allowed him to read by. The hardest part was that the Prior when he visited him made him the most severe reproaches. He called him a rebel, a hypocrite, an arrogant man—this he heard from all the brethren of the Order. Nevertheless John suffered all things patiently in and with the Cross, and God visited



him with consolation and interior peace. Often his dark cell was illuminated by a heavenly light; and when on one occasion, as frequently happened, spiritual darkness and aridity filled his soul, he complained in his melancholy to God, he heard these words distinctly, 'I am here, John; fear not; I will set thee free.' And so it happened.

'Three snares,' St. John used to say, 'are laid by the devil in the path of Superiors: the first, a high appreciation of self; the second, exemption from the rules of the Order; and the third, that being so much occupied with exterior things they are apt to lose the interior recollection of the Spirit.' The first of these snares John avoided by his great humility. He never spoke of the graces which were bestowed upon him, and he fled from praise as from the pestilence. On being reminded by Father Antony of the great courage with which he had begun the reform, he replied, 'Have you forgotten, brother, that we have agreed to say no more about it? God knows, that is enough.' Another brother said once to him that the devil had spoken through a possessed person, saying, 'I cannot overcome that little brother John; he persecutes me everywhere.' Whereupon John replied, 'Be silent, and give no heed to the father of lies.'

His great delight was in meditating before the Most Holy. Did any one come to him on business when thus engaged, he would say, 'Leave me alone; here is my blessedness and my rest.' The most wonderful graces were imparted to him there. Once a nun saw him through the trellis of the choir extended before the Most Holy, and his face glowing with joy. It came into her heart to ask the reason of his joy; and he without hesitation, but in the transport of his soul, replied, 'Shall I not be full of joy, seeing that I have adored and seen my Lord? O my daughter, what a good God we have! O, how good He is!'

Always rapt in God, he said Holy Mass. Once, at the request of a nun, he said a votive Mass of the Most Holy Trinity. At the Consecration he was allowed to see a glimpse of this astonishing mystery. 'O, how I thank thee, daughter,' said he afterwards, 'for giving me an occasion to say the Mass of the Most Holy Trinity! O what splendour, what great good we shall enjoy in the Beatific Vision!' So speaking he fell into an ecstasy, which lasted half an hour. But in order to hide this extraordinary favour, he said afterwards, 'Did you not perceive what a sound sleep took possession of me?'

On one occasion a student saw him at the conclusion of Holy Mass entirely irradiated with light, so that he was dazzled thereby. This appearance made such an impression upon the young man that he quitted the world and entered into the Order of St. Dominic.

Once, when the prioress, Anna of St. Albert, laid down her office in the convent of Caravaca, and they were about to select a new prioress, the Saint, taking this event very much to heart, said Mass for the sisters, which they all attended, that the choice should be well pleasing to God. Again a celestial light surrounded the Saint. Two of the nuns observed that it proceeded from the tabernacle, and when the Saint turned round, rays of light were emitted from his face. One of the sisters, who was not credulous by nature, observed the same thing from another grille.

It happened once, when he was sojourning in the lonely little convent of Pennuela, that a lay brother kindled a fire in a stubble-field near the monastery, believing that since the north wind blew it in an opposite direction no harm could ensue to the monastery. The wind, however, changed, and the flames bore down in the direction of the building, between which and them were laid the stores of wood. Finding it impossible to divert the flames or to save

the building, he rushed frantically to warn the brethren, who, seeing the hopelessness of the case, gave themselves up to tears and lamentations. John, however, hurried to the spot, and perceiving that the fire had already attained the place where the wood and hay were stored, he called to the brethren, and with a voice full of ardent faith, 'My brothers,' said he, 'let us go to the Most Holy Sacrament. It will help us.' All accompanied him to the church, whence, after offering a fervent prayer, he returned fortified with holy water to the place of danger. He then sprinkled the place, kneeling between the fire and the building, while the rest of the brothers in their fear retired, leaving John enveloped in smoke. Soon he disappeared entirely from their sight. Unmoved, he continued to pray until the flames, having rushed up all around him, turned back; and when the smoke was cleared away, the monks perceived their brother upraised high in the air lost in contemplation and prayer. When danger was over, John sank down to the earth, and returned to his brethren without the smallest injury having passed over his dress. At once they reëntered the church and thanked God for their miraculous preservation.

This interior intercourse with Jesus was his consolation in all his sufferings. One night as the brethren slept, he was watching before a crucifix in the church, when he heard from the lips of our Lord the following words, 'John, what reward dost thou desire for all that thou hast done and suffered?' The Saint shuddered at hearing this, well knowing how easily it might be a deception. Looking around and perceiving no one, he continued praying and adoring the Divine Saviour, when again he heard the same words more clearly than before. But not until the Lord had spoken for the third time dared the Saint to acknowledge that it came from God, and therefore he replied, 'Lord, I desire no other reward than to suffer and to be despised for Thy sake.'

That which the Saint prayed for was granted. Already in the past had he embraced the Cross, and to the last the Cross was his portion until he sweetly breathed his soul into the arms of Jesus, on Saturday the 14th December 1591.

THE PLAGUE AT MILAN.

A.D. 1575.

At the breaking out of the plague, St. Charles Borromeo found himself at Lodi, in order to assist at a Requiem Mass for the deceased Bishop of that city. Being made acquainted by a messenger with the appearance of this horrible visitant, he hastened back to Milan. When the crowd of despairing people saw in their midst their faithful Archbishop, they cast themselves at his feet, crying, 'Mercy, mercy, O father!' At once he proceeded to the cathedral, the tears streaming down his cheeks, and, casting himself before the Most Holy, he prayed for his people and for strength to aid them in their dire necessity. But the Lord, who desired to recall that frivolous people to Himself, did not withdraw His chastening hand, but He gave His servant such strength and courage that not only was he himself undaunted by danger, but he knew also how to communicate this heroic courage to his priests, who, full of holy zeal, hurried to the side of the dying in order to give them the last Sacraments. One of the parish priests especially proved, on this occasion, that he had received for the purpose supernatural strength.

A poor plague-stricken man was, through carelessness, cast out amongst the rest of the victims, and in the middle of the night carried away in the dead carts to the open graveyard. Here he lay in the midst of a heap of fifty or sixty bodies, which, according to the orders of the



A PRIEST COMMUNICATES A DYING MAN WHO HAS BEEN CAST OUT AMONGST THE DEAD FOR BURIAL.

Archbishop, were to be buried the following morning with all the religious ceremonies of the Church. At break of day this pious parish priest started in order to take the Blessed Sacrament to some of the sick. When the poor dying fellow heard the sound of the bell, which was being rung by the hand of a server before the Blessed Sacrament, he summoned all his remaining strength, and, rising upon his knees, exclaimed in a dying voice, 'Father, for God's sake, I pray thee give me yet once again the Most Holy Sacrament!' Great was the astonishment of the priest to hear this living voice from the midst of that heap of the dead. For a moment he shuddered, then in the strength of God all natural fear vanished. Full of divine courage, he stepped over dead bodies, removed others out of the way with his hands, and finally succeeded in satisfying the desire of his fellow Christian and brother. He gave the Blessed Sacrament to the dying man, who received it with every mark of fervent devotion, and whilst he still stood over him, the poor sufferer sank gently back on one of the dead bodies, and, in presence of the priest and his Divine Saviour, sweetly and joyfully expired.

He gave the Blessed Sacrament to the dying man, who

ST. PHILIP NERI.

A.D. 1595.

St. Philip was the intimate friend of Brother Deo gratias, and no less of St. Charles Borromeo; but all these three great Saints loved each other in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and all three found their joy and their delight in the Most Holy Sacrament.

In the same way that the memory of St. Charles is honoured in Milan to this very day, so in like manner is St. Philip held in Rome in the highest veneration, although 282 years have passed since his death. Now both the one and the other are honoured on this account, that it was their holy zeal which accomplished a great revolution in manners, created a love for piety, and set forth the necessity for more frequent Communions.

The love of God is a consuming fire, which changes us into itself, and which not unfrequently reveals its presence by extraordinary signs. So powerfully upwards does it impel the natural life that, overmastered by the Spirit, it often appears without the power of itself to extinguish the external marks thereof.

Holy Church affirms that the heart of this Saint was so consumed with the love of God that it could not abide within its own limits. It grew to such a size that two ribs burst asunder. His heart was so on fire with that love that it imparted a certain heat to his body, with which it appeared to glow. Often it happened that during the prayers, or Holy Mass, or in the performance of some pious work, sparks of fire seemed to be emitted from his eyes and countenance.

This circumstance is mentioned in the Bull of canonisation in these words: ‘That interior fire oftentimes overflowed upon his outer body, when he directed his attention to divine things, so that his face and eyes sent forth sparks of fire.’

By day and night, even in the cold of winter, was he obliged to open the window in order to cool this inward heat by a refreshing draught of air. Still more frequently did that glow of love cause him to faint away, so that in consequence, without any other visible illness, he would be obliged to pass whole days without leaving his bed.

When he descended during the night, as he was wont to do, into the Catacombs of St. Callixtus, in order to pray awhile, the consolations which the Lord vouchsafed him were so overpowering that, prostrate on the ground, he would exclaim, ‘It is enough, Lord; it is enough!’ Once the multitude of heavenly sweetnesses was so great that his soul was in danger of being torn from his body. Then he prayed with a loud voice, ‘Depart from me, O Lord, depart; for I, a mortal man, cannot bear such an excess of heavenly joy! Behold, O Lord, I die if Thou hasten not to my assistance!’

This love of God was nourished and increased by the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament and by union with Jesus in Holy Communion. In saying his first Mass he was so overpowered with spiritual consolations that, on account of the trembling of his hands, he was scarcely able to pour the wine and water into the chalice; and this continued until the end of the Sacrifice, especially at Elevation and Communion, and he was frequently obliged to lean on the altar, being otherwise in danger of falling down. He fell into raptures at the altar, particularly after communicating, and also after Mass. On this account he was often two hours

saying Mass, for which reason, towards the close of his life, he offered the Holy Sacrifice in a private chapel of his own. The delight he found in receiving the Holy Sacrament is inexpressible; and after it he would cover his face with a linen-cloth that he might pray and speak with his Heavenly Guest without distraction. It happened frequently that he received Communion on a bed of sickness, and if the father who brought it to him tarried by any accident



he would be overcome by great anguish, which would not depart until the Lord was brought to him in the Holy Sacrament.

In the year 1577 St. Philip was attacked by so serious an illness that all hope of his recovery seemed vain. Now when he heard in the night the bells of the different convents rung out in preparation for Holy Mass, he begged for Holy Communion.

Father Tarugi, who watched by the side of the sufferer, thought it right to refuse his request, fearing that the great spiritual emotion and the shedding of so many tears would entirely deprive him of sleep and life. When the Saint became aware of this he called Father Tarugi to him and said, 'Know this, that I cannot sleep because my desire for the Blessed Sacrament is so great. Bring It to me without delay, and thou shalt see that I shall sleep;' and so it happened. The divine food became his physician; after receiving it he fell into a sweet

sleep, and, to the astonishment of all, recovered from that dangerous illness.

Now because St. Philip fully realised the immeasurable love of Jesus Christ giving Himself to us in the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament, he made it a great point in his teaching to lead his penitents and disciples to a frequent Confession and Communion. Also in those days it was not universally customary for every priest to say Mass daily. These he exhorted with such zeal and energy that a reformation was effected; and seeing that before those days Communion had been comparatively rare amongst the laity, he exhorted them to confession and constant

purity of conscience, and by this means the number of Communions was multiplied more than a hundredfold. His own penitents communicated, some once, some three times a week, and a very few even daily; and thus the Sacrament of Penance was again exalted into its proper place in the daily lives of the people, and drew round the Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament multitudes of adorers, causing, as we have said, a revolution in the manners of the people, and paving the way for a more wide-spread love of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

On the 31st March, in the year 1595, he was taken ill with fever. This illness continued until the month of May, for he had prayed that God would spare him to live until the feast of the Apostles SS. Philip and James. On the 12th May he had a violent hæmorrhage. His pupil, Cæsar Baronius, at once gave him the last anointing. Hardly had Cardinal F. Borromeo entered the room, bearing the Blessed Sacrament, than the Saint cried out with tears, 'Behold my Love! Behold my Good! Give me my Love!' When the cardinal said the words, *Domine non sum dignus*, Philip cried with a loud voice, and weeping, said, 'Lord, I am not worthy, and never was I worthy, and I have done no good at all.' As the holy Host was being brought he exclaimed, 'Come, Lord, come!' When he had received it, 'Now,' said he, 'have I received the Physician of my soul. O vanity of vanities; all is vanity! Who seeks aught else but Christ alone, he knows not truly what he seeks.' It was his great desire that he should bleed to death, for he said, 'God be praised that I can give blood for blood.' After constantly vomiting blood, he said at last, 'I feel that I die.'

On the 26th of May, surrounded by many brethren of his congregation, and blessing all his pupils, he fell asleep in Jesus.

THE VENERABLE URSULA BENINCASA.

A.D. 1580.

In the days of St. Philip Neri there lived at Naples in the congregation of the Immaculate Conception a nun of extraordinary piety, by name Ursula Benincasa. This Sister had a very great interior devotion towards the Blessed Eucharist. When she received it her heart was so dilated with affection that its palpitations could be distinctly perceived by the movement of her dress. It was the All-Holy who gave her strength to support with invincible patience extreme bodily suffering. When in great pain it not unfrequently sufficed for her cure that the priest who had just celebrated Holy Mass should lay his hands on her head by way of blessing; and although her stomach would refuse all food, yet she was never known to find any difficulty in receiving the Bread of Heaven.

Now Pope Gregory XIII., being desirous of ascertaining the truth of her piety, desired St. Philip Neri to put it to the test. St. Philip therefore forbade her to receive Holy Communion. Although grieved beyond measure, Ursula obeyed, and for months contented herself with spiritual Communion; but at length her strength giving way, her desire for the Most Holy became so intense that she fainted from exhaustion. To the great grief of the community the doctor announced that she could not live. One of the Sisters hearing this suggested that the doctor should desire that the sufferer be allowed Holy Communion as a means of recovery. He complied with the suggestion, and no sooner did the priest appear with the Most Holy

than she again breathed, her strength returned, and, after receiving the Bread of Life, she entirely recovered. This and another miracle convinced St. Philip of the purity of her virtue and of her interior life.

The joy which was depicted upon her face at sight of the most holy Host upon the altar made it appear as though she indeed were permitted to see the Lord face to face. To prove the truth of this a priest once ventured to offer her an unconsecrated Host. But the servant of God gave no sign of joy or of adoration. 'Believe not,' said she to the priest, 'that I am permitted to fall into idolatry, and that I adore bread instead of the Divine Redeemer.'

After this the servant of God was permitted to communicate freely. She communicated daily, and frequently received no other nourishment. The Archbishop of Naples, in consequence of her faith and her love for the Blessed Sacrament, permitted her to have a very extraordinary privilege. Every Thursday in the year he gave leave that she should have the Blessed Sacrament in her cell for her special adoration. On these occasions she remained the whole day undisturbed before the All-Holy, without taking food or rest, and when the All-Holy was removed, with St. Mary Magdalen she would sigh, 'They have taken away my Lord!'

THE MONSTRANCE OF FAVERNÉ.

A.D. 1608.

In the year 1608 a great miracle took place in the abbey church of our Lady of Faverné in the diocese of Besançon.

Year by year on the feast of Pentecost a great number of the faithful crowded to this church in order to obtain a certain plenary indulgence. It was the custom on this glorious feast to erect a beautiful altar at the entrance to the choir, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration. Now during the night this altar, upon which was placed a magnificent monstrance with two large Hosts between crystal glasses, took fire, and everything, together with the altar itself, was consumed to ashes; the monstrance with the Hosts alone remained in their place, floating in the air uninjured, and remained there for thirty-three hours, to the astonishment of more than 10,000 persons who came to witness this miracle.

At the expiration of this time, whilst a neighbouring parish priest was offering the Holy Sacrifice, after the consecration the monstrance was lowered gently by unseen hands, and without help of man, laid upon a corporal which had been spread to receive it. It was then taken up and placed upon the high altar. This miracle was attested by an immense number of men, out of whom fifty unexceptionable witnesses were selected. After the strictest inquiry the Archbishop of Besançon declared by a public record that the occurrence at Faverné was an undoubted miracle.

One of the miraculous Hosts was carried to the church at Dolce. With hymns of jubilee it was accompanied by a magnificent procession, composed of the greatest officials and council of the city, a number of burghers, and a crowd of people. It was received with great pomp into the city of Dolce, where it was unanimously resolved to have a procession every year, in order that the most holy Host should be carried around in triumphal adoration.

ST. FRANCIS SOLANO.

A.D. 1610.

This Saint was born in Montilla in Andalusia, in the year 1549, of pious God-fearing parents. He studied in the Jesuit schools, and gave early witness of the gifts and graces with which God had endowed him. He was, after the example of the Saints, continually to be found in deep contemplation and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; he communicated frequently and with the deepest devotion, so that his example became contagious, and he drew the hearts of many pious youths to the love of a similar devotion.

At the age of twenty he entered the Franciscan Order. As a novice he practised the most perfect mortification, wearing under his rough habit a hair shirt and making a log of wood his bed. He ate neither meat, fish, nor eggs, and always went barefoot, whilst prayer was the life of his soul and its delight. After being admitted into holy orders he was made novice-master, and during the season of pestilence devoted himself to waiting on the sick and to administering the Blessed Sacrament to the dying. In the performance of this work he himself was brought nigh to death's door; but he recovered, God having other and greater work for him to do.

Not long after this Philip II., King of Spain, desired to send priests to South America in order to evangelise the native Indians. Francis was chosen for this purpose, and, with a party of priests, set sail in the year 1589. After leaving Panama the ship was overtaken by a storm, and being thought no longer safe was abandoned by the crew; but Francis, taking pity on the unhappy creatures left behind, many of whom were blacks and unbaptised, resolved to share their fate. For some days the ship bore up; but after a time a portion was split away, the hinder portion sinking, and the fore part, upon which the Saint was found, still remained afloat, until a boat came to their relief and conveyed the remaining portion of its unhappy crew to shore. Here their troubles were far from being at an end. It was a barren coast upon which they were landed, and it needed all the Saint's patience and skill to prevent fierce quarrels over the scanty food which was found, and often he appeased the hunger of the famishing wretches by a miraculous drawing of fish to shore. A crew was sent back to Panama in a small boat, and after sixty days a ship returned and conveyed them back to safety.

St. Francis then began missionary life in earnest. Peru and Tucuman were the principal scenes of his labour; but the last five years he preached chiefly at Lima, where he induced the inhabitants of that great and guilty city to do penance for their sins. He had the gift of tongues, whereby he was able to speak to the wildest people and to touch their hearts, and this with so great ease that after a single discourse 9000 persons were known to ask for baptism. These poor Indians felt deeply his loss when at length he left them for Lima. Here there was no place too wicked which he did not penetrate. Theatres and gaming-houses he entered fearlessly, crucifix in hand, and his words carried such force of conviction with them, whilst he spoke of the anger of God against sin, that those who heard him would leave their ill-gotten gains, and hurrying to the church would confess their sins with tears of deepest contrition.

In the year 1604 he suddenly appeared in the market-place of the town. Here he assembled the people together, who were at all times ready to listen to him, and with a voice like the trumpet to judgment called upon them to be converted and to do penance. His words fell like flames of fire from his lips, and all hearts were stirred with contrition, so that confessors were

not found in sufficient numbers to hear the confessions, although they did not quit their work the whole night. This was one of the extraordinary workings of the Holy Ghost through His servant, whose humility was in proportion great. Praise pained him and honour he fled. He considered himself happy that he lived under obedience and could have no will of his own. He was never known to speak an idle word. He had learned music, and could sing, and play the violin, and in times of recreation he would sing, to the great delight and consolation of others. But the love of God had perfect possession of his pure and childlike heart. All his care was for God; for himself he needed nothing. He was rich in the love of God; and if he merely named the holy Name his soul was on fire with love, and so rapt in God that he neither saw nor heard anything else. The love of God frequently stood him in stead of nourishment, so that he forgot to eat. Being invited one day by some good men to an entertainment, he suddenly fell into an ecstasy, in which he spoke these words: 'O, how lovely art Thou, O God! O, how worthy art Thou of all love!'

Like many of the Saints he could not offer the Holy Sacrifice without shedding abundant tears. His brethren of the Order strove amongst themselves as to which of them should serve his Mass, and each thought himself happy who might do so. The President of the Royal Council of the Indies and Vice-King, De Velasco, frequently served the Saint at the altar, in order that he might have the happiness of being near him, and to be strengthened by his heavenly devotion.

It frequently happened that this holy servant of God was so rapt in God during the holy offering of the Mass that he would break forth into singing the praises of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother, causing the pious Prince de Velasco to weep for devotion. Very frequently would the Saint go quite out of himself during Holy Mass, so that it was feared he would be unable to complete the Most Holy Sacrifice. At times also, during Mass, the Saint would be seen floating several feet above ground.

Now because of his childlike obedience to God, and that his spirit had obtained a perfect dominion over his flesh, Nature herself obeyed him, and he ruled over her in such a manner that the wildest beasts hearkened to his will. At his call came the birds and sang with him the praises of God, and during the sickness preceding his death, which took place on the 14th July 1610, they were always gathered near him singing the sweetest songs. Some days before his departure the Saint gave witness, after a strange manner, to his extraordinary love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The feast of Corpus Christi drew nigh. On this day the Saint was always full of holy joy. In the night preceding this feast, while the servant of God lay in great pain upon his poor little bed, his confessor, F. Francis de Mendoza, desired to visit him. On opening the door of his cell he heard the Saint singing in a loud voice. He was singing the *Invitatorium* of the Breviary, *Venite adoremus, et procedamus ante Deum*, and whilst so singing his hands were reaching forth towards the corner of the cell, as though he saw there the Divine Majesty in bodily form.

ST. ROSE OF LIMA.

A.D. 1617.

Rose of St. Mary was born at Lima in Peru, of poor parents. In her baptism she received the name of Isabella, but as she lay in her cradle there appeared to bloom so fair a rose upon

her face that her mother resolved never to call her by any other name. Notwithstanding the gentleness of her character, Rose from a child showed great strength when called upon to bear suffering. Her love of God and desire to please Him above all when but five years of age was shown after a wonderful manner.

One day, as she was playing with her elder brother and other children, it happened that her brother disordered her hair. Rose was displeased with this and left her companions; but her brother called after her, saying, 'Little sister, wherefore doth it grieve thee that I should have discomposed thy hair? Knowest thou not that the fair locks of maidens are the devils' nets, by which they seize thoughtless souls and drag them into hell? Be assured that God is not well pleased with thy beautiful hair, which thou prizest so highly.'

These words made a deep impression on the heart of the gentle girl. Hell appeared open before her, and sin with all its horrors. She began spending her time in prayer and weeping, and taking the vow of perpetual virginity at that early age, she made an offering to God of her hair, which, unknown to her mother, she cut off to the very roots.

At an early age she made her first Communion; and at this time, thinking that her name Rose was not her baptismal name, but rather bestowed upon her on account of her great beauty, she went and confided to the Mother of God her grief and her fear; then she received Holy Communion, when she heard from the lips of the Queen of Heaven the following words: 'Thy name pleases my Son, whom I bear in my arms: and, furthermore, thou shalt no longer merely be called Rose, but thou shalt take the name of Rose of St. Mary.'



The poverty of her parents, who had a family of eleven children to bring up, went to the heart of Rose as she grew out of childhood. She worked diligently night and day to help them, though her strength was but small, but amid all her industry her heart was ever in the presence of God. The desire of prayer grew stronger and stronger,

so that by the time she had attained the age of twelve years she was already mistress of the secrets of prayer. Often in the midst of her sewing she would fall into ecstasy, and whilst her hand containing the needle and thread was drawn out in the air her heart was raised out of herself in union with God.

Her mother was desirous of her marriage, but she withstood all solicitations which would interfere with the desire of her heart to give herself to God alone. She fled the world entirely, marred her beauty by rigorous fasts, surrounded her head with a crown of thorns, and finally assumed the penitential habit of the Third Order of St. Dominic. She had persuaded her parents to allow her to build for herself a little cell in their garden, in which, until within three years of her death, she lived in the deepest recollection and poverty of spirit. On Sundays and holydays she accompanied her mother to church, but when questioned why she did not attend Holy Mass on other days she replied, 'God has so cared for me that I hear not one, but many Masses in my cell.' It was afterwards discovered that Rose being in rapture was every day seen in the nearest church, and sometimes even in the church of St. Augustine, which was many streets distant.

Rose did not live alone in her little cell. Nature united her voice with that of the Saint in the praises of God. The presence also of her guardian angel was a continual source of joy to her. She used to see him by her side under the form of a lovely boy, and she would make use of him as a messenger to her heavenly Bridegroom. When His presence did not revive her at the accustomed hour, singing, she would say :

Away, thou beauteous boy, and go,
Go to our dearest God and Lord,
And ask Him why He tarrieth so,
Why hideth He His face adored.

If He be far I cannot live,
My heart is friendless and undone;
His presence only rest can give,
His love can cure my grief alone.

Away, thou beauteous child, and say
How overflows my heart with pain
And longing; how I grieve alway,
Until His face I see again.'

And the Lord Jesus would indeed come, and she would see Him with the eyes of her soul.

It was observed that Rose received two special graces in Holy Communion—strength and satiety. Her mother remarked the first. So often as Rose went to church in order to receive Holy Communion she was, through fasting and discipline, so weak that she was frequently obliged to rest by the way. But scarcely had she received the Body of our Lord when a fresh strength took possession of her, and she hurried home so quickly that her mother could scarcely keep pace with her. The second grace was apparent to all, for after returning to her cell she would remain absorbed in heavenly contemplation, refusing all food, although she had eaten nothing the previous day. From time to time being permitted to receive the Blessed Sacrament during an octave, on those occasions the divine food sufficed, and took the place of all ordinary diet.

Three days before her death Rose returned to her home, and took leave of her beloved garden cell, where she had spent her life of heavenly joy. Here she sang her dying song.

Her mother, who listened not far off, heard how Rose, in a voice full of heavenly sweetness, entreated her holy Father Dominic that the Lord might not leave her. She suffered inexpressible pains, which, being supernatural, she refused to attempt to alleviate. Being consumed with intolerable thirst as it drew towards midnight, and the doctor having forbidden water to be given her, she felt herself united in a special manner to the Saviour on the Cross, who with parched tongue exclaimed, 'I thirst,' without having one drop of water to drink.

But amidst all her severe suffering Rose never lost her sweet calm of spirit, and with unshaken faith put her entire trust and confidence in God. She would cry out, 'Yet more, O Lord, yet more! Fulfil Thy holy will in me, heap pain upon pain; yet also increase in me patience.' When at last, through pain in her side, she had vomited blood, she was heard to sing in a soft voice,

'Chastise me not in anger, O my God!
But O, in mercy do Thou spare this rod;
Behold, the very fountains of my heart arise,
And this poor blood of mine unto Thee cries.
May it blot out my sin,
And grace eternal win!'

As she had rejoiced in life, so in death she thanked God for the great grace of having been born, and for having lived, and now for dying, in the bosom of the Catholic Church. She made acts of faith, hope, and charity with the greatest fervour possible, and turning to her confessor she said, smiling, 'I assure you, father, I would not forego for all the world this blessed night. Already I am invited to the heavenly feast, already is the hour fixed; shall I not go now that the door is wide open for me?' And indeed at midnight she made signs for the blessed candle to be brought to her, signed her forehead, lips, and breast with the sign of the Cross, begged her brother to remove her bolster from her head in order that it might rest on the wood beneath, raised her eyes towards heaven, and with the words, 'Jesus! Jesus! be with me,' was that lovely Rose gathered and transplanted for ever into the garden of heaven on the 30th August 1617.

BLESSED JOHN BERCHMANS.

A.D. 1621.

Like SS. Aloysius and Stanislas Kostka, Blessed John Berchmans has been given to Christian youth for an example and patron. He was born in the year 1599, at Diestheim in Brabant, of poor but very pious parents. In his childhood John was familiar with prayer, but at the same time did not neglect his studies. He would rise very early in the morning and hurry to church, where he would generally hear two or three Masses before school; upon his return, if he found his parents' house closed, he would enter the nearest church and say his Rosary.

When he was ten years old he attended the school of the parish priest of our Lady of Diestheim, where he distinguished himself by his spotless innocence and exact obedience. The pious Superior was his pattern, and towards him he behaved as a child to a father, and because of his very great respect for the priesthood he was allowed even as a boy to wear the cassock and tonsure. His great joy was to hear sermons, and his dearest occupation to serve Holy Mass, and great were the graces which he drew from the Divine Sacrifice. Already he

entertained the most childlike veneration for the Blessed Mother of God, and the most glowing love for Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament.

He had just reached the age of eleven years when, on a certain high festival, it pleased God to awaken in him a great desire to make his first Communion; so he presented himself in all humility before the Superior of the seminary, and begged for the grace to receive our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. For this he prepared himself so diligently that his Superior perceived plainly that not a natural, but rather a high degree of supernatural, fervour was at work in the soul of this favoured child of God. From this time until his fourteenth year John communicated every fortnight, as well as on all the special feasts of our Lord and of His Most Blessed Mother. Thus he grew in grace and in every heavenly virtue until, in that short space of time, the parish priest of Diestheim, who for a long period had observed him, said of John that in this child was found a treasury of every virtue.

At fourteen years of age he put himself under the instruction of the Jesuits, and after three years' preparation entered the Society of Jesus. His novice-master made proof of his extraordinary virtue in the following manner. He commanded a hundred novices to keep a sharp watch over him, in order to bring him word of the smallest fault that they should discover. Now it is well known that novices in the religious life are most severe critics of each other's actions; at the end of a certain time, therefore, when the novice-master inquired of them what they had to say on the subject, wonderful to relate, not one of them had a charge to bring against him. Again the novice-master bade them observe whether John, in whom no one could find any fault, were also equally diligent in the practice of all virtues; and to their great astonishment, after diligent observation, they were constrained to confess that he was wanting in none.

It was the custom of Blessed John to visit our Lord seven times a day in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and on quitting the presence of our Lord to beseech St. Aloysius and St. Stanislas to keep watch during his absence.

It was with incredible care that he prepared himself to receive Holy Communion. But when one of his companions inquired why on vacation-days, however great the feast might be, he always abstained from the Holy Mysteries, he replied, 'Because on days of recreation I cannot receive them with the recollection which is befitting so great a Majesty.' When a feast-day fell on a Sunday he would complain, saying, 'This week we have a holy festival short.'

Blessed John Berchmans had attained his twenty-second year when he was taken ill on the 5th August, the feast of our Lady ad Nives. By command of his superiors he went into the infirmary and took to his bed. On the Sunday after the feast, being consumed by fever, he received Holy Communion, at his own express desire, by way of Viaticum. Before receiving it he begged the Father Rector to allow him to have his mattress laid upon the ground, in order that he might thus receive the sacred Body of the Lord in company of as many of his companions as could be present.

His mattress was therefore placed upon the ground, and the holy youth being dressed in his clothes was laid upon it, according to his wish. At half-past five in the morning the Father Rector entered his room, and John raised himself to his knees with help, and, after saying the *Confiteor*, whilst still the priest held the holy Host in his hands, he poured forth unexpectedly the following declaration:

‘I declare that there is here present the very Son of God the Father Almighty and of the ever Blessed Virgin. I declare that I live and die as a true son of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church. I declare that I live and die a true son of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. I declare that I live and die a true son of the Company of Jesus.’ These unexpected words, spoken with such deep devotion, moved all present to tears.

His last hours were not free from attacks of the enemy; he was permitted to foresee them and to be prepared. His Superior, remarking from his earnest excited words during delirium that such was the case, said to him, ‘John, attend to me, and say nothing but what I bid thee; say, “Lord, I believe; Lord, I hope; Lord, I love Thee.”’ John repeated the words, but when he was again in presence of the Evil One, he exclaimed, ‘Let us go into the house. I have not done it with my will.’ Then his Superior spoke with great energy, ‘John, thou hast hitherto been obedient. Be so now. Think of nothing else.’ Wonderful to relate, peace returned immediately to the spirit of the holy youth; his countenance brightened up; he no longer said those words, but with his whole soul repeated such acts of recollection as were suggested to him, and then gave signs that he desired to see the Father Rector.

The father had now finished his Mass, and returned to the dying youth. A priest said the Litany of our Lady, and he inclined his head at mention of her name; then, with his eyes fixed upon his crucifix, his rosary and his rule in his hand, and the most holy names of Jesus and Mary upon his lips, he yielded up his guileless soul into the hands of his Creator on the 13th August 1621.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

A.D. 1622.

On one occasion there presented himself at the confessional of this Saint a certain soldier, who, with the intention of communicating, had thoughtlessly taken his breakfast with his companions, and with the same thoughtlessness had communicated afterwards. His companions, on this account, assailed him with vehement reproaches, whilst a sergeant of his company spoke to him in the following words: ‘What hast thou done, miserable one? How hast thou deluded thyself? Knowest thou not that none may receive the Body of our Lord except fasting? O my God, what a sin thou art guilty of!’ The poor man was so confounded by these words that he not only began to weep bitterly, but expressed the agony of his soul in great and bitter cries. ‘O miserable me! How shall I obtain forgiveness for my sin? How could I possibly commit so great an iniquity?’ When, however, at length, through temptation of the devil, he fell into such raving as to cause compassion in the hearts of all his companions, it was proposed to him by a sergeant to seek Father Francis. The unhappy man followed his advice, and threw himself in an agony of grief at the feet of the holy man like one possessed. The greatness of his penitence prevented his words from finding vent. Gently and lovingly the Saint spoke to him. ‘What is it, my child? Wherefore this great grief? Take courage, and let us see what I can do for you;’ and thus gradually learned, in the broken words of the poor penitent, the sin of which he had been guilty. The Saint calmed him, and asked whether he had done this intentionally—with knowledge and will. But when the poor man declared he would die a thousand times rather than commit so great a crime, ‘My son,’ said he, ‘go in peace; God forgives thee, for He sees thy broken heart.’ ‘At least,’ said the poor man, ‘give

me a penance; let it be what it may, I will perform it.' 'Go,' said the Saint; 'say an "Our Father" and a "Hail, Mary," trust in God, and pray for me.' Words cannot describe the love and devotion that poor soldier conceived for the Saint—who was, indeed, the refuge of the sinner, the consolation of the penitent—and never did he fail to listen to his preaching when his duties did not forbid.

The great fruit of the preaching of St. Francis was owing to the manner in which he drew



ST. FRANCIS ADORING BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

the hearts of men to the love of the Blessed Sacrament. In spite of all difficulties which he encountered with the heretics, he succeeded in honouring the Blessed Sacrament publicly at Annecy by processions during the Forty Hours' devotion. The prayers before the Most Holy had the happiest result, as a great number of misbelievers were converted by means of this devotion to the true faith. After this the Forty Hours' Exposition was held in the chief city of Thonon. The place was crowded with heretics as well as with the faithful. St. Francis preached a mission to the people, and many were turned to the faith. When he entered the country he was met on all sides by the opposition of heretics; but during his journey through the land he left behind him twenty thousand Catholics confirmed in the faith and full of holy zeal. He was then but twenty-eight years old. With regard to daily communion he said, with St. Augustine, 'As for

daily communion I neither praise nor blame it. I counsel weekly communion for all who desire to keep their souls free from attachment.' The many heavy and toilsome works which the Saint undertook for love of God shortened his days. Rich in that love he died at Lyons, where he had preached for the last time, on 28th December 1622.

THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT IN THE LOUVRE AT PARIS.

A.D. 1667.

King Louis XIV. of France was exceedingly troubled with the thought that Turenne, whom he regarded as the most virtuous man of his age, and loved as the bravest of his generals, was under the influence of religious error; for Turenne was a Calvinist. On this account he frequently made known to him his wish that he might be brought back into the Catholic Church. The wishes of King Louis XIV. were generally looked upon as commands; but Turenne, being no time-server, disregarded the wish of the King, because he could not acknowledge his error. Then did the learned Bishop Bossuet undertake to open the eyes of the great general, and to make clear to him the truth and excellence of the Catholic faith. But he succeeded



MIRACLE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN THE LOUVRE: CONVERSION OF TURENNE.

not: Turenne remained a Calvinist. His prejudices against the Catholic faith were too strong, and there was wanting in him the grace of faith, which alone is capable of being victorious over error. Above all, the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament appeared to him to be incredible. He admitted the beauty and consolation of this doctrine, but he could not believe in it. 'Ah,' he would say, 'that it were possible I could be convinced of the truth of this lovely, this most consolatory teaching! How happy are Catholics who believe it! But did they truly believe it, would they not spend their whole lives at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? For my own part, were I to be convinced of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, prostrate in the dust I would adore Him incessantly.'

In the mean time the discussions with Bishop Bossuet continued, and Turenne, earnestly desiring the gift of faith, sighed with the blind man in the Gospel, 'Lord, make me to see!' But the moment when his prayer should be answered was delayed for a long time.

Now it happened on one occasion, during one of these interviews with Bossuet in the Louvre, that the palace took fire. The fire had broken out in one of the galleries which connected the Palace of the Tuileries with that of the Louvre, threatening general destruction to all the famous works of art therein collected. Every effort to control the devouring element seemed to be in vain, especially as a storm of wind fanned the flames to the very height of fury.

Turenne, who never was known to turn aside from any kind of danger, hurried at once to the scene of destruction, and proceeded to direct the men in their efforts to extinguish the flames. The Bishop, however, seeing the imminent danger, and following a divine impulse, took his flight at once to Him who commandeth the winds and the waves, and they obey Him. Hastening to the chapel of the palace, he took the ciborium containing the Most Holy Sacrament, and suddenly appeared with it at the opposite end of the burning gallery. The men understood the sound of the little bell, and, separating on either side with the deepest respect, allowed the Bishop to pass through the cloud of smoke which surrounded him. He pronounced a benediction over the flames, when, behold, at once the wind ceased and the fire withdrew, as in acknowledgment of His presence who commandeth storms. The surrounding people, struck by the might and majesty of the miracle, fell on their knees and intoned the *Te Deum*, while the great Turenne, himself subdued by a power to which he no longer offered any resistance, sank to the ground, and adored.

From that moment Turenne became a Catholic, joining in the chant of the *Te Deum* as the Blessed Sacrament was carried back to the tabernacle. This wonderful occurrence took place in the year 1667. Now from the moment that Turenne learned the truth, he loved and followed it; and more especially was he always known to adore, with the deepest humility devotion, and faith, our Divine Redeemer present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

BLESSED JOANNA (OR JANE) OF THE CROSS.

A.D. 1673.

In the year 1603 there was born to Joseph Floriani, a painter of Roveredo, in the Austrian Tyrol, a daughter, who in baptism received the name of Bernardine. Even as a little tender child Bernardine grew up with a perfect sense of the presence of God, which increased with her increasing years. She was always very recollected, and when questioned thereupon she replied, 'I feel within myself the presence of my Heavenly Father.' Her eyes were often wet with tears. 'I must weep bitterly for my many sins,' she would sigh; 'God reproaches me with them.' Externally she had little in common with other children; she grew up quickly, and her beautiful pure soul, within which God dwelt, possessed a beautiful body. At eight years of age she gave up all childish games. Then it happened that one of her beloved brothers died, another quitted the paternal house to earn his bread in foreign parts, her parents were reduced to poverty, and her pious mother fell ill. These sad occurrences renewed Bernardine's fervour, which had begun to give way before a natural love of dress and ornament. She made the resolution to flee every sin, and although she had previously formed the inten-

tion of dedicating herself to God, since she thought that by marriage she might be able materially to assist her mother, she resolved to enter that state on the first fitting opportunity.

But God ordained otherwise.

In the house of her father, who was a good Catholic Christian, she had frequent opportunity of meeting with priests and religious of the Order of Capuchins. This holy man, whose mission it was to kindle the love of God in the hearts of all with whom he came in contact, recognised from the first the nature of Bernardine's high vocation. 'Thou art not fitted for the business of the world,' he said to her; 'thou art called to be a bride of the Saviour, and to merit in His service the richest treasures of His heavenly favours. God Himself seeks thee, thy coöperation alone is wanting in order that thou mayest become a highly-favoured handmaid of the Lord. This I foresee by the Spirit of God.' And so indeed it happened. After a long and severe conflict, through which, by means of severe suffering and by repeated union with God in Holy Communion, she had been strengthened and raised up, Bernardine, with the help of like spiritual-minded maidens and friends, laid the foundation of a kind of convent, where she lived, together with a number of pious young women, without, however, taking the vows. In the conduct of this religious community, which was placed in her hands, she was often visited by poverty and trouble; but the Lord always helped her in wonderful ways. One day the house-mistress came to Bernardine and said, 'The sustenance of the house is at an end; we have no more grease, nor oil, nor salt, nor meal.' 'And not a penny wherewith to buy any,' replied Bernardine, smiling. 'But meal there must needs be,' she added significantly. 'A few handfuls, yes,' replied the house-mistress. 'Surely that is a mistake,' repeated Bernardine; 'thou hast not rightly measured.' But all assured her they had seen the empty cask. Upon this she desired them make a fresh examination of the cask, and truly they found, to their astonishment, two measures of meal, out of which they prepared four ovens full of bread, which served them until money was earned wherewith to buy more.

Bernardine succeeded in obtaining for her community the privilege of being cloistered. After three years of difficulty, owing to the opposition she received, they took the habit of religion, when she received the very appropriate name of Joanna of the Cross. The cross had already been her portion, and it was hers to carry so long as she lived.

Now the strength which this servant of God attained in order to meet these troubles, and all crosses attending a new foundation, she drew entirely from the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. 'Living or dead, so I may have my Saviour,' was her motto. 'If I am denied the Body of my Lord Jesus,' she would say, 'I lose all strength wherewith to keep up this earthly body. Jesus is my only love and the support of my life. Were all angels and saints from heaven to come to me they would not content me, for I only hunger and thirst after my God. He alone can fill the painful void in my heart.' Even in a severe illness she caused herself to be carried to receive Holy Communion. 'I can scarcely tarry till daylight,' she says herself. 'Hardly has the bell rung for Holy Mass, during which I am to receive the Most Holy, when a storm of joy arises in my heart. My whole body trembles in the very place where I sit. At one time I am motionless and lifeless as a stone for very joy; at another I laugh and rejoice, and every one present is drawn into the same state of jubilation. Once a Capuchin, with the Body of Jesus in his hand, delayed in communicating me, then, whilst I fixed my gaze upon the All-Holy, it appeared to me that the priest was raised in the air, that he became

illuminated, and that Christ appeared to escape from his hands without having refreshed me. Then all the powers of my soul arose in an uproar, looking for my Saviour, until the Heavenly Food was given me to the unspeakable rest of my soul.'

On one Christmas-eve she watched in the church; it had hardly struck twelve when an irresistible longing seized her soul for the Blessed Sacrament; and being unable to contain her ardour she sent her maid to request her confessor to come and give her Holy Communion. He answered her summons at once; and when she had received the Body of the Lord, from being as pale as a corpse her cheeks became all aflame with heavenly glow. Another time the holy Host left the hands of the priest and pierced her heart as with an arrow, causing her a sharp pain. She fell on the ground as one wounded to death, and remained many days in this condition. She suffered pain in her heart, and in her hands and feet, as though the wounds of Jesus made themselves to be felt in her. In like manner, on a later occasion, the consecrated Host entered her soul like a sweet soothing ointment, strengthening and healing her, and removing every trace of the suffering she had endured. And Jesus spoke thus in her inmost soul: 'See now thou bearest Jesus the Crucified within thee; seek Him no longer on Calvary, but rather in thy heart.'

The life of Joanna was truly a crucifixion. Nevertheless, supported by the love of God in the Holy Eucharist, she attained the advanced age of seventy years. Her last hours fulfilled the words which the Lord had said to her: 'Thou must die the death of the sufferings of Christ. That is My will and none other.'

Fearful pain tormented her, and so weakened her that she often lay as one dead. Yet, ever at peace and resting on God, she bore her pain until, on the 26th of March of the year 1673, she died. Her confessor stood by her side, when she cast a look upon him of unutterable anguish. It was as though she would say, 'When wilt thou permit me to go to my God?' The holy man understood it, and as the tears fell down his cheeks he folded his hands, and said with a faltering voice, 'Daughter, I give thee the merit of obedience. Go, then, to the enjoyment of thy God and thy Creator!' Hardly had Joanna fully comprehended these words than she raised her eyes to heaven, folded her hands across her breast, laid her feet one over the other as one crucified, and passed away softly and sweetly as soon as she had received the priest's blessing.

BLESSED MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION.

A.D. 1690.

Blessed Margaret Mary, who was particularly chosen by God to reveal to the world the immeasurable graces flowing from the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, was born at Lautecourt, a place in Burgundy, in the year 1647. Her noble father was unusually pitiful towards the poor, and on this account the blessing of God rested upon his family. Of his four children Margaret was the most specially favoured, for at a very early age she consecrated herself to God by a vow of chastity during the elevation in Holy Mass. At four years of age she was received into the house of her godmother, and instructed in the Christian religion. She was always thoughtful, and without the knowledge of her instructress would often slip into the neighbouring church in order to think over, in the simplicity of her heart, those holy truths which were being taught her; and even then her heart began to feel the love of Jesus.

whom she knew to be dwelling in the tabernacle. As time passed on she became so much attracted to the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament that she spent every moment of her time that she could snatch from ordinary duties in the church before Him. At nine years and a half Margaret lost her father. She was then taken to be educated in a convent. At this time she was of a very joyous temperament and inclined to pleasure. Then did God make use of two means in order entirely to wean her from all inclination to worldly things. The first of these was her first Communion, in which she lost all taste for every pleasure out of Him; and the second was a severe illness, from which she recovered after having promised the Blessed Virgin to be her faithful daughter and to consecrate herself entirely to her service.

Margaret was now thirteen years of age. At this time she had, on account of her purity of heart, her horror of sin, and her fervent love of our Lord, received the grace of seeing the Divine Redeemer near her, sometimes under the form of the Crucified, or as He is represented in the pictures of the 'Ecce Homo,' or as carrying His Cross; and this sight of Him caused her to suffer such great compassion and desire that every ordinary trouble became easy to her which she had to bear in her mother's house. Amongst these not the least was the resolution of giving her in marriage, in spite of the vow of chastity which she had taken, and on which account our Lord comforted her in the following manner:

Once, after Holy Communion, He represented to her that He was the fairest, richest, mightiest, and most perfect Spouse, and reproached her with the thought that, after having promised herself to Him for so many years, she permitted herself to entertain the suggestion of abandoning Him for another bridegroom. 'Under-



stand,' said He, 'if thou dost Me this disfavour I will abandon thee for ever; but if thou art true to Me, I will never leave thee, but I will make thee victorious over all thy enemies. I pardon thy ignorance, for as yet thou knowest Me not; but if thou wilt follow Me I will teach thee to know Me, and I will reveal Myself to thee.' From that hour Margaret resolved

to suffer death rather than change her resolution, and for this purpose she desired to devote herself to a life of religion in a convent. Then she became strengthened by a wonderful taste for suffering, and the result was that she mortified her body in every possible manner. She fasted, she scourged herself, she deprived herself of sleep, girded herself with a knotted cord, and bound her arms with little iron chains. Besides these bodily austerities, which she imposed upon herself out of love for her crucified Saviour, she was obliged to suffer extraordinary interior pains, until at length her mother and relations consented to her retiring into a convent.

She was twenty-three years old when this, her great desire, was accomplished. When the various neighbouring convents were proposed to her she refused, knowing that our Lady had chosen her for herself. On this account she said to her brother, 'I shall go into a far-distant cloister and become a daughter of St. Mary, where I shall never see either relations or friends; for, as a religious, I will give my whole heart to God. I desire to leave the world, and, hiding myself in a dark corner, to forget it, and beg to be forgotten.' At length Margaret came to the Convent of our Lady's Visitation at Paray-le-Monial; and when she entered the guest-chamber she heard these words spoken within her soul, 'Here is the place where I will have thee to dwell.'

As a novice she hid nothing of what passed within her from the mistress of novices. She was delighted to be under obedience, accepting all her superiors' commands as those of God. On one occasion, having inquired of her mistress how she should dispose herself for prayer, she received for an answer, 'Go place thyself in the Lord's presence as a fair piece of canvas before a painter.' Margaret understood not the mistress's words, but dared not question her meaning. Then heard she an interior voice, which said, 'Come, and I will teach thee.' In very truth, as soon as she had entered into prayer, the Divine Saviour showed her how her soul should be this piece of canvas, upon which He would trace the features of His life that had been spent in love and privation, labour and silence, until at length it had been completed by sacrifice. He desired the self-same impressions to work upon her soul after He should have purified it from all imperfections. At the same moment the Lord removed from the heart of His bride all affection for earthly things, kindling in her soul a great desire to love and to suffer for Him, so that it allowed her no rest, and she could think of nothing but of how she could show her love for Him by the crucifixion of herself. She invented all kinds of penance; but undertook none without permission of her mistress, to whom, with the simplicity of a child, she opened her heart, and whom she perfectly obeyed.

In this manner, and with ever-increasing perfection, Margaret passed the time of probation. When she made her vows our Lord ratified them by unspeakable consolations.

Once on a Maundy Thursday, but a few days after Margaret had arisen from a severe illness, she begged of her Superioress the permission to watch all night before the Blessed Sacrament. Apparently her weakness was so great as to render this impossible, therefore the Superioress only allowed her to remain a short time before the hour of bedtime. But this did not satisfy her. She entreated the mother to allow her to remain, assuring her that strength would be given her, and that her health would not suffer. She desired more especially to pray for the souls in purgatory. At length permission being granted, Margaret remained before the Blessed Sacrament from half-past eight in the evening until the next morning, upon her knees, motionless, taking her place in choir at Prime without showing symptoms of fatigue.

But if her outward recollection was so remarkable on this occasion, that which passed in her soul was more wonderful still. Her Superior requiring her account under obedience, Margaret replied that the Lord had granted her the grace to take a part in His agony in the Garden of Olives, and every moment it seemed as though her soul must become separated from her body; nevertheless God and His love had supported her in life.

From that time she always passed the night of Maundy Thursday in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, but only with permission of her Superiors, and she could do no otherwise; for when many of the Sisters, out of envy, accused her of hypocrisy, she resolved only to watch the night in her cell. The Lord reproached her on this account, and when she still withstood the grace which she longed for, He spoke severely to her, saying, 'Know that, because thou goest out of My presence, I will make thee feel it no less than those who are guilty in this matter: I will hide My presence from them, and when they seek Me they shall not find Me.'

The intense love of this servant of God for the Divine Redeemer and the peculiar and extraordinary graces which she received were, in a sense, the result of her penance and life of mortification. Men of the world think only of the enjoyment of all kinds of pleasures, but Margaret only thought how to find ways to crucify herself. Every means, every opportunity, was welcome by which to torment her body. Humility was in her the foundation of this self-crucifixion. Always had she some fault, either in herself or in others, to atone for. Whenever a fault was committed at once she requested leave to do penance for it. When, however, she was not allowed this she would choose for her food what was worse. More than once she was perceived to mix water with her food, so as to destroy the taste thereof; sometimes during the heats of summer, in order to quench the violent thirst which always consumed her, she would take warm instead of cold water into her mouth.

When our Lord willed to enrich His bride with His highest graces He laid in her soul a foundation of the deepest humility and patience, and these were so impressed upon her as to become quite natural in her. Margaret honoured the Cross of our Lord in a very special manner, so that He showed her His Heart wounded for love of us, upon which she saw the words, 'My love rules in sufferings; it triumphs in humility; it lives in unity.' Once He gave His Cross into her hands with these words, 'Take, My daughter, the Cross that I give thee, and plant it in thy heart.' At another time He showed her the picture of an easy, and one of a severe life crucified through love, and said to her, 'Choose, My daughter, whichever pleases thee most; whichever thou chooseth, that self-same grace will I bestow upon thee.' Margaret committed the choice to her Heavenly Bridegroom, who thereupon gave her the image of the crucified life; 'and although,' she says, 'my whole body trembled, I received it with all love; I pressed it to my heart, and felt a strength so great that I can scarce think it was occasioned by aught which I had seen upon the picture.'

The choice, however, made its consequences to be felt throughout her future life, which henceforth was a series of troubles, sufferings, contempt, and physical pain, such as the Lord had foretold.

But the object of the special purification of this highly-favoured child of God was that in these later days the treasures of the Sacred Heart might be revealed to man, and this devotion taught throughout the entire Church.

Therefore on one occasion, as she knelt in deepest contemplation before the Most Holy Sacrament, she suddenly found herself plunged, as it were, in the immediate presence of God. At the same time the Lord Jesus appeared to her visibly, and allowed the head of His servant to recline softly upon His breast. In a moment He discovered to her for the first time the hidden mysteries of His Divine Heart, and the treasures of love with which it was consumed for love of men. Then filling the heart of His servant with yet greater love than before, He said to her, 'My Divine Heart is so full of love for men, and specially for thee, that, because it can no longer contain within itself the flames of its love, it willeth through thy instrumentality to declare and extend itself over all men, in order to enrich them with the treasures which it contains. I manifest to thee the great worth of these treasures, which contain salvation and healing, in order to save mankind from the depths of perdition. I choose thee, in spite of thy ignorance and unworthiness, that it may appear all the more evident that what I am about to do is of Me.' Then it appeared to Margaret that the Divine Redeemer desired in return for this gift that she should give Him her heart, which she did; and after this that the Son of God did truly take it and place it within His own, which through His open wounded side she saw shining like the sun at midday, or like a fiery furnace at full heat. There lay her own heart, like a tiny ray of light lost in the deep of that glowing furnace. Then it appeared as though the Lord replaced it in her side all glowing with divine splendours, saying, 'This, My well-beloved, is a rich pledge of My love, that I should place within thee one single spark of My divine love, which shall dwell in thee until the last moment of thy life. Until now thou hast borne the name of a servant; from henceforth I will give thee the name of the well-beloved disciple of My Divine Heart.'

Only with the greatest difficulty did Margaret persuade herself to discover to her Superiors what had happened, and when she did so she was severely reprovèd as a dreamer, and the divine favours she had received were called illusions. Margaret, though full of joy at these humiliations, nevertheless fell ill with the pain of the suffering in her side, which grew so violent that at last she appeared to be at the point of death.

Her recovery being equally miraculous, her Superior was at last convinced of the true state of the case. From thenceforth she stood by her in all things, in spite of the ill-feeling of many of the Sisters; and in all her sicknesses, which were frequent, the Divine Redeemer appeared to her, opening out to her more and more fully the secret treasures of His Sacred Heart.

But, as in all cases of special divine illumination, great resistance and difficulties stood in the way of establishing this devotion. At length our Lord sent to Paray a servant of His, Père de la Colombière, priest of the Society of Jesus, who, being appointed confessor extraordinary to the convent, became acquainted with Margaret, whose interior life was made known to him. Being highly learned in the ways of Almighty God, this holy priest perceiving in all this the divine hand, he consoled her, and commanded her in all things to commit herself without reserve to the interior teaching of God.

It was by means of the full coöperation of Father Colombière that the revelations made to Blessed Margaret Mary were acted upon, and the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus took the form which has grown into the world-wide devotion of the present day. In the coldness and Erastianism of these latter times such a devotion was needed as would rekindle in

the heart of Christendom an active belief in the Sacred Humanity and of the divine graces which alone can flow to us through the human nature of the God-Man.

Blessed Margaret Mary died October 17, 1690.

THE PESTILENCE IN PROvence STAYED BY THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

A.D. 1720.

Blessed Margaret Mary was taken to her rest before the resistance which was generally manifested to the acceptance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart was removed by divine interposition. This happened at length, and in the following miraculous manner:

In the year 1720, thirty years after the death of that beloved servant of God, Provence was visited by an appalling pestilence, which in the course of a few months carried off one half of the inhabitants of the great city of Marseilles. The Bishop of Marseilles, when all human means failed, resolved to take refuge with Him who holdeth in His hands the keys of death and hell, and to propitiate the anger of God the Father by the merits of the Most Sacred Heart of His Divine Son. He exhorted the faithful of his diocese to unite in the spirit which animated himself, and commanded that the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus should henceforth be kept on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, in a most worthy manner and as one of the greatest feasts of the Church. On the feast of Corpus Christi, after a long procession, in which he had carried in his hands, and with bare feet, the Most Holy Himself, he dedicated himself and his whole diocese to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus with all the love which is due to the Divine Redeemer.



THE PESTILENCE IN PROvence: DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

His prayer was heard. From that very day the evil began to diminish, and in a short time it had disappeared. This fact was recorded by the magistrates of the city. But God had in reserve a yet more distinguished mark of protection in reward of the zeal of the pious bishop and of his flock.

In the month of May of the year 1722 the pestilence broke out afresh in the city, throwing all the inhabitants into the most frightful consternation. Death, the king of terrors, had placed his throne in the midst of them, and reaped a fearful harvest,

‘I stand,’ writes the good bishop, ‘through the mercy of God, between the dead and the dying. All around me are laid low; and of all the servants of the Lord who have accompanied me, none remains to me but my almoner alone. During the last eight days I have seen two hundred dead bodies rotting round my house and under my windows. I am obliged to go into the streets, which, without exception, are covered with bodies in a state of putrefaction or half devoured by dogs. Every place is so full of filth that it is nearly impossible to know where to tread. Holding a sponge saturated with vinegar to my nose, and with my dress tucked up under my arms, I hear the confessions of the dying in the midst of the bodies of the dead, and console them with the last Sacraments. I have almost no confessors left. My priests have done wonders of zeal and charity, and given their lives for their brethren. All the Jesuits are dead but three or four. Many came far hence to find their death amongst us.

‘Three hundred Capuchins are dead. Twenty Minorites and as many Franciscans have died in the service of the sick, and also very many Carmelites. I will not speak of my own beloved clergy who have sacrificed themselves; I look upon myself as a general who hath lost the very flower of his army.’

Nevertheless it was in the Sacred Heart of Jesus that the prelate took refuge. At his summons the collected magistrates of the city made a vow that every year on the feast of the Sacred Heart they would go in solemn procession to the church of the Visitation of St. Mary, in order to honour there the divine object of our love, to receive Holy Communion with suitable offerings, and then to return home in the same manner; and this procession was vowed in perpetuity. This vow was publicly proclaimed before the high altar of the cathedral by the chief of the magistrates, in the name of all, on the feast of Corpus Christi and in face of the procession, in the midst of which the Most Holy Sacrament was borne by the lord bishop, the above-named magistrates kneeling before him. Now the entire population exulted over a vow through which with lively faith they anticipated deliverance from their appalling foe.

The vow was heard in such wise as to cause not only the greatest astonishment, but also to shed the sweetest consolation on the whole city. From that day forward the sick began to recover, the healthy were preserved from infection; mistrust yielded to a perfect confidence, as the inhabitants of the city believed themselves to be under the safe protection of the pitiful Heart of Jesus their Redeemer. The plague so wondrously passed away that, six weeks afterwards, the bishop was able to say, ‘We enjoy at present perfect health, so that we (which in so large and populous a town is almost unexampled) for some time past have had no deaths nor even sick, either in Marseilles or in the environs of the town.’

MIRACULOUS CURE OF A WOMAN BY MEANS OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

A.D. 1725.

The following wonderful and most consoling fact, attested as it is by undeniable and trustworthy witnesses, proves that the Saviour of mankind is as verily and indeed present now upon earth in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar as formerly during His earthly pilgrimage, when He went about everywhere doing good.

On the feast of Corpus Christi, May 31, 1725, in the parish of St. Margaret’s, Paris, Anna,

the wife of a turner named Delafosse, aged forty-five, was, during the solemn procession, healed of an incurable disease by a visible miracle. The account of this miraculous cure is taken from the pastorals of the Archbishop of Paris and the Cardinal de Noailles.

For twenty years had Anna Delafosse suffered from a flux, which, for the last seven, had been so severe that all attempts to cure her were not only vain, but dangerous. For eighteen months she had been unable to move even with the aid of crutches, and daylight had become unendurable to her. When the pain in her side suffered her not to lie in bed she was carried and placed in an armchair. The slightest motion caused her to faint away. Her illness was known to a very great number of persons, and it is asserted by at least seventy trustworthy eye-witnesses that when the feast of Corpus Christi approached she was in a most pitiable condition.

Now at this time she felt within herself a strong desire, when the procession should pass the door, to beg of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament the grace of being healed. With this intention she caused herself to be carried to the house-door, praying fervently, and full of confidence in the Redeemer who then passed by. As she could not bear the light, she kept her eyes closed; but when she was told that the All-Holy approached, she exerted herself to fall on her knees; in consequence, however, of her great weakness, she fell forward on her hands, crying out, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me well. I believe that Thou art the self-same who entered with triumph into Jerusalem. Forgive me my sins, and I shall be healed.' Then did she crawl upon her hands and knees after the Blessed Sacrament, ever crying aloud, 'Jesus Christ, Thou canst heal me!' The crowd of people following in the procession were partly astonished and partly annoyed at the prostrate appearance of this crawling woman; and there were not wanting some who held her to be either drunken or out of her senses, and so endeavoured by force to drag her away. But the woman would not be hindered, but with the words, 'Let me follow my God,' continued, in spite of great agony, to creep along.

Such great, such living faith could not go unrewarded. Of a sudden she feels inwardly strengthened, and, unassisted by the two persons who accompany her, she rises up. Now, when she perceives that her body still trembles, and is ready to fall, she exclaims in a louder voice, 'Lord, permit me to enter Thy temple, and so shall I be healed.' At the same time she entreats her conductors to let her go alone; and truly, to the astonishment of all, she proceeds unsupported, and reaches the parish church at the moment when the Most Holy Sacrament is being taken back. Being arrived at the church porch she redoubles her prayers, and prays with new devotion that Jesus will not allow her to enter into that holy place without completing her cure. Immediately on setting foot within the church she feels, like the woman in the Gospel, that the fountain of her blood is dried up, and that she is healed of her plague.

For more than an hour and a half the happy woman remained, either standing or kneeling before the high altar. From thence, her heart all aglow with gratitude to God, she returned home, without being inconvenienced by the light, on foot, and without assistance. At her arrival what an assemblage there was of friends and neighbours, and all who knew of her previous afflicted state! They saw with astonishment this poor woman walking up and down, and, overjoyed at her perfect recovery, they united in praising the All-Holy, who indeed had worked this wonder in their midst.

One of them, who had often seen her crawl upon her hands and knees, and who, on this account, had called her the poor creeping worm, declared her belief in the Almighty Power which had wrought this miracle, than which a greater could scarcely be imagined. Also the surgeon Prouhet, who had known of her state for fifteen years, affirmed in his declaration that when he first heard of her cure he could not believe it; for if that woman could walk it could only be through a very great and extraordinary miracle. A *Te Deum* was sung as a public thanksgiving in honour of the Blessed Sacrament for her recovery.

ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE.

A.D. 1751.

St. Leonard, who, on account of his innumerable missions, has received the title of the Apostle of Rome and of Italy, may most justly be called the Apostle of the Most Holy Sacrament and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He was born at Port Maurice on the 20th December 1673, and was baptised by the name of Paul Jerome. His father, an honourable well-to-do citizen, was also a God-fearing man, who, in order to shelter his chastity while owner of a little packet-ship, made a vow—which he punctiliously kept—of never permitting a woman to sail therein.

Under the eyes of this pious parent Paul grew up to be a God-fearing youth. At the age of twenty-one he entered the Franciscan Order, already far advanced in virtue and knowledge. Being ordained priest he fell ill, and could find no means of recovery. At this juncture he turned to the Blessed Mother of God, and with most fervent prayer he promised her to devote his life entirely to missionary work, and in this manner to the honour of God and the conversion of sinners, if she would obtain of her Son for him the gift of restored health. His prayer was granted. In a short time after he became so strong and healthy that he was able to undertake any work, however difficult.

In the year 1708, at the age of thirty-two, he began his mission work. For forty-four years he travelled through all villages, cities, islands, even the entire kingdom of Italy, in order to sow the good seed of the Word of God. He passed through the roughest country amidst snow and rain, and even to the latest years of his life, with naked feet. He wore always the worst of clothes, fasted continually, and permitted himself but little repose on a hard bed. He entertained the greatest mistrust of self, and submitted himself at all times to the commands of others. But all the more he trusted in the Lord, saying continually, ‘O my Jesus, mercy!’ Innumerable were the conversions which, by the grace of God, he effected. Abuses were rectified, manners improved, devotion and the fear of God increased. He used to say, ‘My only deadly foe is mortal sin.’ This one enemy of the soul he persecuted incredibly, both in himself and in others, by prayer, penance, mortification, and his wonderful ardent preaching. It was as a special means of resisting and overcoming this great enemy of man’s salvation that he regarded the devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. This devotion he himself had practised from his tenderest years.

When he commenced his missionary career he made this Sacred Mystery to be the aim and centre of all his endeavours, and strove to honour it on every occasion by inward and outward

acts of faith and love, and to further this devotion by every means in his power in the hearts of others.

His first visit when he arrived at any place was to the Blessed Sacrament. Daily he offered Holy Mass with such intense devotion that all present who assisted thereat were edified. In order to prepare himself worthily for this—the most awful act of priestly functions—he confessed every day, sometimes even twice in the day. Everything, from the hour of Compline until that of Mass the following morning, he offered in intention, as a preparation for that Most Divine Sacrifice. In the sacred observance itself he most scrupulously fulfilled the very smallest of the prescribed ceremonies; he received Holy Communion daily by way of Viaticum. Every morning he heard as many Masses as his work permitted, and at the



THE VIATICUM BEING CARRIED TO THE SICK BY ST. LEONARD.

Elevation it was his custom to make an intention of being present at all the Masses offered that day throughout the whole world, in order to present them to the Divine Majesty.

Holy Mass he called the sun of Christendom, the soul of the faith, the central point of the Catholic religion, towards which all the customs, ceremonies, and the other holy Sacraments tend, and the circumference containing within itself all that is good and beautiful which may be found in the Church or God. He never approached the altar without offering to the Eternal Father three-and-thirty times the Precious Blood of Jesus, in honour of the three-and-thirty years of His life, in order to gain the grace of purity of heart, which should never be stained by the smallest spot.

In all his missions he impressed with fiery words of zeal upon his hearers the duty of

attending the Blessed Sacrament with the greatest possible solemnity when being carried to the sick. In consequence of his exhortations, in many places where the Holy Viaticum had become totally disregarded it was a fact that after each of his missions it was accompanied in the most glorious manner. This was specially observable at Ancona. Here his exhortations had such effect that from that time the burgesses hurried in couples to follow the procession whenever the All-Holy was being carried to the sick. On some occasions five hundred wax lights might be counted in these processions.

This, and the devotion and fear which he taught the people to entertain towards the Blessed Sacrament, was followed by solid establishment in the faith and divine consolation to all who assisted in it. In one place this pious custom had fallen into such disuse, because the people were ashamed of carrying the baldachin, that the priest was in the habit of waiting a considerable time, until here and there a good man could be found to bear the canopy. The pious missionary spoke much and warmly on the subject; and, after considerable pains, the people were so convinced of the greatness of the honour of thus accompanying the God of heaven and earth, that on the first opportunity the whole village collected together in order to follow the Blessed Sacrament, and there was even a holy strife amongst them as to which should have the privilege of bearing the canopy. It has continued so ever since in that village. Also at Minerbio, in the province of Ferrara, the whole people turned out of doors, carrying wax lights, in order to accompany the Blessed Sacrament to a poor person whose hut lay ten minutes' walk from the church. In the same way he carried his point at Ochiobello in Ferrara, where he induced bishops and other persons of rank to accompany the Blessed Sacrament.

He had it specially at heart to spread the devotion of the Perpetual Adoration, which was already founded in Rome, and in other places besides. How great was his zeal in propagating this devotion may be gathered from the fact that before his death he had the satisfaction of seeing it introduced into one hundred and thirty parishes. He succeeded also, though indirectly, in introducing it into the far-distant kingdom of Mexico. In short, from his earliest childhood until his dying day our Saint was full of unbounded love for Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament.

Being greatly advanced in years, the Saint undertook, by command of the Pope, a mission into the Bolognese Mountains. He commenced this arduous work in the midst of such great bodily suffering that he not unfrequently fainted on the chancel floor, and was unable to finish preaching. Many times during this mission the servant of God said it would be his last. Being recalled to Rome by the Pope he set off on his journey, though he was in his last sickness. Being come to Foligno he desired to say Holy Mass. His companion, perceiving his great weakness, begged him not to attempt it; the holy man replied, with the deepest emotion, 'Brother, one Holy Mass is worth more than all the treasures of the world.'

So he began the Holy Sacrifice, which he could not conclude without the greatest difficulty. Being arrived in Rome he was carried into the infirmary, where he confessed at once and received Viaticum. After this he spent some time in calm recollection alone with God. When the physician arrived he begged him, with childlike simplicity, not to order him to eat flesh-meat. The doctor, on finding the pulse nearly gone, ordered him a reviving draught. When the servant of God had taken it he thanked him for his love; but went on in a half-whisper

to himself, saying, 'O, that men would do as much for their souls as for their bodies!' When night came he desired that no one should sit up with him but the infirmarian. During the night the latter heard him uttering glowing acts of love to God, and appearing to converse with the Blessed Virgin, as though she were present. The infirmarian approached his bed, and saw the face of the Saint glowing with celestial fire. They hastened to give him the last anointing; immediately after which, and without the slightest movement, he fell sweetly asleep in Jesus on November 27, 1751.

ST. JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO.

A.D. 1767.

In the year 1600 there dwelt in the kingdom of Naples two poor but pious gentlefolk, by name Felix Desa, a carpenter, and his wife Francesca. At his death he was found to have left certain debts, and upon the entrance of the servants of the law into her poor dwelling, in order to seize her goods in payment, Francesca, in terror, fled into the stable, where she gave birth to a son, who in baptism received the name of Joseph. Under the eye of his pious mother the child grew up to be a holy boy, who at the early age of eight years gave signs of future sanctity. Although he was most industrious at his work he would show an extraordinary love of recollection, and it often happened that at prayer he would lose himself in contemplation. He would be seen kneeling motionless, with fixed eyes and half-open mouth, so that other children were wont to give him the title of 'Bocca aperta' (*open-mouthed*). He was known to wear a rough hair shirt and to chastise his body in various ways.

Until his seventeenth year he learned and practised the trade of shoe-making, when the desire to enter into the Order of St. Francis grew upon him too strongly to be neglected. He tried his vocation as lay brother amongst the Capuchins, but was rejected, as they supposed him to be wanting in a true vocation. At last, however, the Franciscans of the Monastery *della Grotella* took pity on him. In their subterranean chapel (hence the above name) a miraculous image of our Lady was venerated. These good friars admitted him, and after trial he was permitted to take his vows as a lay brother amongst them.

He was set to do the lowest work, which he joyfully undertook, and performed with punctilious obedience; at the same time he redoubled his penance and his prayers. His sanctity became so well known that, when he collected alms, he won more souls for God by his pious behaviour than he gained bread for the cloister.

At length the grace was given him to receive ordination as a priest. Full of gratitude for this great gift, and consumed with the fire of the love of God, he thought no more but how he should consecrate most perfectly his life to God. He practised the extremest poverty, so that he only wore one poor garment. For five years he ate no bread, but lived upon dried fruits and vegetables. During the fasts he only ate a little on Thursdays and Sundays, but meat never passed his lips. These severe fasts emaciated him, and his complexion grew pallid; but after receiving Holy Communion his appearance was fresh and blooming. He chose a retired cell that was dark and incommodious. He would prefer to pray in unfrequented places, that he might more freely give himself to contemplation. His love of poverty was such that he divested himself of everything that was allowed him by rule; then, prostrate before his

crucifix, he would cry out, 'Behold me, O Lord, bereft of all earthly things. Be Thou my only Good! All else but Thee I look upon as a danger and as a loss to my soul.'

If one asked him what he desired most in the world, he would reply, 'That God may occupy my whole heart.' Often he would turn to the image of the Crucified and say, 'Jesus, Jesus, draw me up! Here below I cannot stay. Draw me where Thou art to Thyself.' This



ST. JOSEPH LIFTED UP DURING MASS.

excessive desire to be ravished from earth, in order to be united to Jesus, was doubtless the reason that he was frequently and irresistibly drawn to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Once, in the chapel of St. Ursula, in the presence of many others, he was suddenly raised above the somewhat elevated choir towards the tabernacle, where he adored the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, kneeling before it in mid air, whilst a light shone forth from his face. In this situation he remained until his Superiors called him back. Love worked in him such close union with God that truly it might be said that his life was hidden in God. Of him it could be said he prayed always and without ceasing; he was dead to the world and the world to him; and his spirit so lived in heaven and upon heavenly things that it would appear he saw divine mysteries as it were in a mirror, and all the beauty of heaven would seem to lie open before him. He had a wonderful knowledge of souls, and was remarkable for the gift of prudence in his conduct of them. In the faces of men whose hearts were tainted with sin he could see spots of dirt, and would say to such a one, 'Go wash thy face, which thou hast besprinkled with ink.' One evening the Saint was engaged at Grotella in conference with his Superior, when suddenly he cried out, 'O, what a horrible stench! That is the stink of hell!'

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The Superior smelt nothing; but Joseph, being unable to bear it, begged permission to go to Cupertino. Having arrived, he went straight to a house, hurried up the stairs, and there he found a number of men occupied in concocting salves for purposes of enchantment. Seized with holy zeal, with his staff he broke the pots and other vessels, and regarded the evil-doers with such looks of holy fury that they all fled in haste.

In the year 1649 John Frederick, Duke of Brunswick, undertook a journey through Europe, in order to visit the various courts, and amongst others he visited Rome. He was about twenty-five years old. During his stay he was anxious to go to Assisi, in order himself to see a Saint whose sanctity was spoken of even in his own country. Pope Innocent therefore gave him letters of introduction to the convent, desiring the fathers that he should be permitted free converse with Joseph, in hopes of his conversion.

The Superior hastened to comply with these commands, receiving the Prince and his friends with honour. At once the Duke requested to see Father Joseph. The following morning being Sunday, the Prince and the two Counts, one of whom was a Protestant and the other a Catholic, were taken secretly into the chapel where the Saint usually said Mass. No one was aware of this, and Joseph himself did not know of the arrival of the strangers. He was standing at the altar, and in the act of breaking the Host, as the Duke and the two Counts entered the chapel, when lo, a loud sigh escaped the lips of the Saint, and laying the Host down upon the paten he fell into an ecstasy, raising himself with bended knees high in the air, and descending after a while with a cry towards the altar, where with great difficulty he broke the holy Host.

The Duke being much moved with what he had seen requested the Superior, after Mass, to inquire of Joseph what that strange cry and sigh might signify. The Superior replied that the Saint was not willing always to give such explanations, but at the request of the Duke he would require it of him as an obedience. Now the Saint, under obedience, replied, 'Ah, the strangers whom thou didst send to hear my Mass are of a hard heart, and do not believe all that the Catholic Church believes. On this account the Lamb became hard in my hands this morning, and I could not break it.'

The young Prince, struck by this reply, desired after dinner to have speech of the Saint. The conversation lasted until evening. What passed between them no one knows; but afterwards the Prince retired into the chapel, and, lost in thought, remained kneeling before the altar of St. Francis. A great strife was going on within his soul between truth and error, and although apparently ashamed of his weakness he put off his journey, in order once more to attend the Saint's Mass.

But a new miracle awaited his eyes. At the moment of Elevation there appeared upon the Host the form of a black cross, and at the same time the Saint uttered a similar cry, and was raised high in the air, in which position he remained for at least a quarter of an hour. Then he who was a Protestant cried out, 'Accursed be the day that I came into this country; in my own land I was at peace, but here I have found anguish and distress of conscience.' But the Prince, at sight of the miracle, began to weep. A ray of truth had touched him, his heart was softened, although he still withstood the call of God. Now Joseph, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, perceived the strife which was going on in his soul, and smiling at his irresolution, said after Mass to a friend, 'Let us rejoice, the deer is wounded.'

After Holy Mass the Prince, now deeply affected, conversed again with Joseph until midday, when after dinner he desired to return to the cell of the Saint. Joseph came out, and meeting him threw his girdle round the Prince's neck, saying, 'I bind thee for heaven!' At these words the Saint fell into ecstasy, and being come to himself he said softly to the Prince, 'Go pray at the altar of St. Francis, attend Compline and the procession, and do all as thou seest the brethren do.'

The Duke, entirely humbled, obeyed the Saint, performing all as he was bidden. Accompanied by the Cardinals Fachinetti and Reppacioli he threw himself before the Blessed Sacrament, and said with a loud voice, 'The King of the whole world is adored in this church. In this church I believe and acknowledge all that the Catholic Church acknowledges and believes.'

Once more a wandering child was won to the arms of Mother Church. It was till a late hour in the night that the Prince continued conversing with the Saint and learning the mysteries of his wisdom. The next day he resumed his journey to his own country, promising, however, to return the following year and make a public renunciation of his errors. And the Prince kept his word.

St. Joseph of Cupertino died on the 18th September 1663, at the age of sixty-three years and three months. His body was exposed for veneration, and he was buried in the chapel of the Conception, and canonised by Clement XIII. in 1767.

BLESSED IMELDA LAMBERTINI OF BOLOGNA.

The following beautiful legend is related of the Blessed Imelda of Bologna, of the Order of St. Dominic. She was very young when she was received into the Order, and from her tenderest years had shown inexpressible longing to receive the Lord in Holy Communion. Being eleven years of age her confessor still withheld this privilege from her, and continued to delay her first Communion from time to time. Whenever she saw the Sisters go to the holy feast she wept most bitterly and inconsolably. Once, as she was complaining aloud to her Heavenly Bridegroom, asking Him why she alone was denied this happiness, lo, suddenly one of the holy Hosts was seen in the air hovering over her head. Those near her received this as a sign from Heaven that it was the will of God she should be communicated at once. Her confessor obeyed with all devotion; and the act of love with which this child received her Lord for the first time was so deep, so fervent, that—happy offering of such happy love!—she sank lifeless to the ground as her pure soul, for the first time and for ever, was united to her Lord.

BLESSED ANNE CATHARINE EMMERICH.

A.D. 1774-1824.

This greatly favoured servant of God was born in the village of Flamske, in the diocese of Münster, on the 8th of September 1774. Her parents were poor country people. God having elected her to be an instrument in His Church, and a witness for the Holy Faith, she was from her tender childhood remarkable for her pious and graceful conduct. Her guardian angel

was present to her sight, the Child Jesus played with her, and Jesus the Good Shepherd assisted her in the care of her sheep, while the Mother of God herself appeared to her and instructed her in every grace. Catharine corresponded to these wonderful graces. Whilst yet a little child she denied herself meat and drink and many childish pleasures out of love for Jesus. She shared her last morsel with the poor children around her. She was always in haste to carry comfort and consolation wherever she found it needed. She hated sin as the greatest evil in the world, and would often be heard to pray, 'Ah, dear Lord God, let me die; for they who grow up grieve Thee with great sins.' Prayer was her delight. When her parents had gone to rest she would rise out of bed, and pray in company with her guardian angel, for two or three hours, and frequently until morning dawn.

At twelve years of age she received her first Communion, and, as hath been the case with all the Saints of God, it was a day of fervent joy for her. With simplicity of devotion she spoke to the Blessed Sacrament, and on festivals sang before it the holy hymns of the Church. When she could not remain in church so long as she desired she would, in her nocturnal prayer, turn herself toward the spot where the tabernacle in the church was situated, and pray towards it with sweetness of devotion.



OUR LORD OFFERING THE CHOICE OF CROWNS TO ANNE CATHARINE EMMERICH.

At sixteen years of age, whilst working in the fields with her parents, she heard the bell of the convent of the Annunciation, which suddenly awakened in her for the first time the desire of a religious life. At eighteen she went to Koesfeld in order to learn sewing. She begged at various convents to be received, but partly on account of their poverty, and partly

on that of her own, she was refused. With great industry she saved twenty crowns, with which she desired to learn the organ, that she might thereby succeed in being admitted into a convent. But her great desire to be of use to the poor, and her charity, left her no time for learning music, and her savings were soon distributed amongst the needy, so that at length she was obliged to beg for means of support at her mother's hands. 'God will reward it, dear mother,' she said to her; 'I have indeed nothing left. It has been the holy will of God to assist others through me; He must now take care of me. I have given Him all; He will know well how He will help us all.'

Catharine continued some years at Koesfeld, spending her time in work, in prayer, and in deeds of love, being ever an obedient silent child in the hand of her guardian angel; and God, who is pleased with simplicity and humility, led her by wonderful ways.

Catharine had attained her twenty-fourth year when she received a grace which the Lord has granted to many compassionate sharers of His bitter sufferings, namely, the visible conformity in the suffering of His adorable Head—the crown of thorns.

Catharine, being one day in the Jesuit church at Koesfeld, was kneeling before a crucifix in earnest prayer. The organist's daughter was by her side. Being wrapt in contemplation, Catharine saw the Heavenly Bridegroom, in the form of a resplendent youth, proceed from the tabernacle towards her. In His right hand He held a crown of flowers, in His left a crown of thorns. These He presented to Catharine in order that she might take her choice. Immediately she seized the crown which had been upon His own head, and herself with both hands pressed it upon her own. At the same time unspeakable pains took possession of her, which from that time never left her. The apparition vanished, and Catharine left the church with her companion. The pain increasing, she inquired of her friend whether she did not perceive something on her head, which she, however, denied. Nevertheless her forehead and cheeks began to swell, although as yet no blood flowed from the wounds.

On the Thursday and Friday of the Passion the crown of thorns became visible; she pressed it to her head, and every time the thorns entered more deeply. When she entered the convent blood began to flow through her head-dress. It was not, however, at first remarked by the Sisters, and Catharine kept silence.

At length she was received into the convent of the Augustinians at Dülmen; her poor little cell seemed to Catharine like the gate of heaven. She had come there to follow Jesus in His poverty, and by suffering and the Cross to be conformed to Him. She longed for greater discipline, but she found it not. Her convent was relaxed, and the dress alone separated the religious from the world. The Lord Himself therefore became her Novice-Master in the school of the Holy Cross. She was exposed to every kind of hardship and misconstruction; her manner of prayer, her union with God, and her marvellous gifts of grace were all misunderstood by the community. No priest had any comprehension of her hidden life, no doctor knew how to treat her physical ailments. Everything she bore with patience and love. God endowed her with the gift of tears, which she shed in abundance for the sins of mankind, and which were understood by God alone. Her confessor accused her of vanity, and even hypocrisy. Her trial was at its full when she had an illness which lasted for years, and which she bore in meek silence. In the midst of all she lived with God and His creatures in perfect peace. Did she work in the garden, the birds would come to her and perch upon

her head and shoulders, singing with her the praises of God. Her guardian angel was always visible to her, protecting, helping, and warning her.

Now the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar was the source of that consolation and joy, which gave her strength to endure and patience to persevere. When employed as sacristan, she was overjoyed to be occupied in the service of the Blessed Sacrament, although it was with great bodily pain that she accomplished it; for she knew that she served the King of kings, and that the angels themselves would envy her if they were capable of such a feeling. In these special duties her soul would often be suddenly transported, and she would climb up to high places—window-sills, pillars, and projecting walls—where, humanly speaking, it was impossible to stand. Then she would carefully clean and adorn everything within her reach. From a child she had never known fear; and she was never alone, for her guardian angel assisted her, so that all she did was done beautifully and well.

At the end of the year 1812 she received the stigmata. She was lying ill in bed, and contemplating the sufferings of our Lord, when she prayed to share His sufferings. After singing five ‘Our Fathers’ in honour of the five sacred wounds of our Lord, she felt a fervent desire to suffer with Him. Then did she perceive a light descending from above, and in the midst thereof her living crucified Lord, who approached her, His wounds shining like five bright rays of light; and it was as though her desire flowed from her own hands towards the sacred wounds of our Lord. Then did it appear to her that threefold rays of light darted from the hands, the feet, and side of the Crucified, in the form of arrows, and pierced her hands, feet, and side. She lay for a long time senseless, and when she recovered she perceived the drops of blood in the midst of her hands.

From this time Catharine desired nothing but the Blessed Sacrament. As soon as she received it she was fortified and consoled in the midst of her sufferings. Her greatest suffering was caused by the honour which she received. Again and again she prayed that the outward sign of the presence of the wounds might be removed; but in vain. She received but one answer, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ And so she bore her cross after the Lord until the end.

On the 9th February 1824 she had finished the work given her to do, which was none other than to suffer for the Church and her members. She lay many days in the agony of death, and at length she sank with the words on her lips, ‘Help, O Lord! O Lord, come!’ And her pure soul fled to her Heavenly Bridegroom, to join the train of those virgins who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS.

A.D. 1775.

Like St. Leonard of Port Maurice, St. Paul of the Cross, founder of the Congregation of the Passionists, devoted himself to mission work amongst the people. His recollection and devotion in the house of God were so great that others who saw him felt drawn to greater devotion themselves. One day he was accompanied by a pious youth to the church, when it happened that a heavy bench fell upon his foot and severely hurt him. Nevertheless he went to the altar, knelt down, and remained motionless in prayer. His companion, remarking that

blood was flowing from the wound, called his attention to it; but he gave no heed, and went on with his prayers. When he quitted the church and his companion entreated him to allow him to bind up his wounds, 'They are roses,' said he; 'Jesus Christ hath suffered many more, and I deserve far more for my many sins.'

To the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament the pious youth ever united the contemplation of the bitter sufferings of the Lord. From this ceaseless contemplation flowed his wonderful love of suffering, and on this account God destined him to heavy work and many disappoint-

ments. Praying one day before the Blessed Sacrament he heard the words, 'A son who approacheth Me should entirely belong to Me;' and at the same time there was shown to him in vision a scourge made of golden rods, upon each of which the name of Love was inscribed. Paul endeavoured to kiss these rods, and bore with wonderful patience every adversity which later on happened to him.

St. Paul received holy orders at the hands of Pope Benedict XIII., and from that time he devoted himself entirely to the saving of souls. It would not be possible to reckon the number of his missions, still less the number of souls whom he converted to God. An officer said once to him, 'Father, I have been in the midst of fearful battles, I have stood by the cannon's mouth, and have never yet known fear; but your words make me tremble from head to foot.' The strength and unction with which he preached, as in the case of all holy missionaries, he drew from his love and devotion for the Most Glorious Sacrament. It was permitted him



to receive special light for others during the celebration of the Mysteries, as an eye-witness relates. On one occasion Paul accused a religious of a fault, and before he could confess it or deny the Saint said, 'You cannot deceive me because I learned it this morning at the altar.'

John Baptist Cenoï, an honourable man, was sick to death. The priest had already said the Prayers for the Dying when Paul of the Cross sought him. The sick man was insensible

and in his death agony. Then the son of John Baptist, Antony by name, approached, and besought the prayers of the Saint for the recovery of his father. The servant of God replied, 'I shall be in Storta to-morrow, and shall say Holy Mass at eleven in the morning; and when I take Jesus Christ into my hands I will not let Him go until He shall have granted me this favour.' Antony said, 'But will my father be yet alive at eleven o'clock to-morrow?' 'Yes,' was the reply. The sick man remained in the same state until eleven o'clock the next morning, when, opening his eyes, he inquired for his son, and asked him for something to eat. From that time the sickness left him, and he recovered.

The Saint's love for God became more glowing as he approached the hour of his death. In the midst of all his great pain his spirit was never troubled, he never gave a sign of impatience, never a wish for recovery. Often he said, 'I will neither to live nor to die, but that alone which God willeth.' To a religious who showed sympathy for his sufferings he said, 'Do my sufferings displease you? they do not displease me;' and, as though he looked upon himself as nothing, 'Earth,' said he, 'seeketh the earth.'

One day before his death he exclaimed with holy courage, 'When our time comes we must die courageously. The chicken-hearted fear death. O, how sweet, how beautiful to die by the hand of a Father!' As his end drew near he received the Holy Viaticum, and when the priest entered the room with the ciborium he cried out, 'O dear Jesus, I declare that I live and die in the communion of the Holy Church. Come, O Jesus, come!' Then, striking his breast and in a flood of tears, he exclaimed, 'Lord, I am not worthy!' He died on 18th October 1775.

BLESSED BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE.

A.D. 1783.

In the year 1783, at the season of the fast of Lent, a poor man, clothed in a beggar's garb and supported by a stick, was seen wandering through the streets of Rome. He had just quitted a church, and being weakened by sickness he sought a couch whereon to die. A compassionate heart opened his door to him, and when he closed his eyes for the last time under the good man's roof the world cried out, 'The Saint is dead!'

Now this poor despised beggar-man, whom this universal cry concerned, was no other than the beggar Benedict Joseph Labre. He was the son of a countryman of Amette in the French diocese of Arras, and being piously brought up by a priest, who was a relative of his family, he felt an early call to leave the world and to enter into religion. For this purpose he visited many monasteries, but was universally rejected on account of his youth and feeble health. At length he wandered into Italy, first to the holy house of Loreto, and afterwards to Assisi and other holy places. He travelled on foot in miserable rags, which he never changed, and without provision, which he left entirely to the charge of Providence; his resting-place was the bare ground, his roof the sky over head. At all times he travelled alone, in great retirement, continually praying and in quiet contemplation of God. In the same way he sought, like his Divine Master, who had endowed him with an extraordinary understanding and heavenly light, to do good wherever he went. Here he consoled the afflicted, there he healed the sick, to one he gave good advice, for another he succeeded in obtaining grace; and everywhere he was himself an example of humility, of obedience to the Church, and of every Christian virtue.

From the year 1770 until the year 1775, when he took up his abode in Rome, he passed the life of a pilgrim, journeying from one place to another. In Rome he visited all the sacred places. Every year he went to Loreto, and in other celebrated places he was continually seen to kneel, to pray, and to weep. What kind-hearted men gave him he received with thanks; what was worst he kept for himself, and the rest he distributed amongst the poor.

After he had concluded his pilgrimages he returned to Rome, and took up his dwelling in the recesses of a ruined wall near the Colosseum, where once the blood of the holy martyrs was shed in streams for the love of Christ, until he found himself under the necessity of being taken into a hospital. In Rome he visited daily the various churches, of which he was most particularly devoted to the church of Sta. Maria dei Monti, where was exposed a famous miraculous image of the Blessed Mother of God. From his childhood he had been in the habit of styling her 'My Mother,' being drawn to our dear Lady by feelings of the tenderest affection. Indeed he visited all the churches in turn, because they are the dwelling-places of Him who was his All in all—his well-beloved Jesus.

When the All-Holy was exposed, especially on the occasion of the Adoration of the Forty Hours, he knew not how to tear himself away from his Saviour in the Most Holy Sacrament, and people who would speak of him, not knowing what name to call him, would style him the 'Poor man of the Forty Hours' Adoration.' His demeanour before the Most Holy Sacrament was so devout, his body, his head, and his eyes, which were ever fixed on our Lord, were so motionless, that in the process of his canonisation it was said of him that he used to resemble a statue; also, that it appeared to some that an adoring angel rather than a praying man was then rapt in contemplation. In the presence of his beloved Saviour the interior fire of his heart shone forth in his illuminated face, to the astonishment of every one who observed him; for when he was not engaged in prayer it was colourless as a corpse, yet when before the Blessed Sacrament it was tinged with a roseate hue, and he became altogether insensible to outer things. In this situation he would often remain in adoration for five or six hours; yes, even for a whole day, without giving the slightest nourishment to his emaciated body. One who saw him in the church of St. Anne from the early morning until sunset, kneeling motionless in the attitude of the deepest rapture before the Most Holy Sacrament, on one occasion of the Forty Hours' Exposition, was filled with the greatest amazement. His astonishment was so great that he called the attention of all the brethren of the Confraternity of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, whom from hour to hour it was his duty to call to take their watch, to the fact, and he maintained that the same thing might be remarked of Benedict in the other churches when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration. In all the indulgent churches which he visited in the course of his pilgrimages he was to be seen from daybreak until evening, kneeling immovably before the tabernacle, and sometimes late into the hours of night. This would have appeared wonderful in any one, but more particularly in Benedict, who, on account of the clothes he wore, must have been covered with vermin, and who, besides this, suffered from tumours in his knees. Indeed, to human nature this had not been possible but for two things: one on the part of God, from whom he received wonderful knowledge and clear vision, by which his understanding was filled with heavenly mysteries; the other on his own, on account of the love which was burning in his heart towards Jesus. He who loveth indeed beareth all things.

One day, as he was praying in the church of Sta. Maria in Via Lata, towards midday, when usually no one is in the church, he permitted his sighs and loving aspirations to have free course. There were, however, two priests in the choir, which was entirely separated from the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, in which Benedict was praying. Now when they heard those deep sighs, urged by a pious curiosity they approached the spot without noise, and then they perceived Benedict before the tabernacle, with outspread arms in the form of a cross, heaving such loving sighs that it was clearly perceptible how full his heart was of divine love. The priests left him with sorrow, at the same time that they united their own prayers with those of the poor beggar-man.

It was the same when he assisted at Holy Mass. Daily he was present at many with the greatest attention and devotion, whilst he united himself in spirit to the intentions of the priest who offered the great Sacrifice, and appeared unable to withdraw his eyes from the altar or his spirit from the sublime action. On one occasion being called by a sacred minister who was in the sacristy he made no reply, neither did he move till Holy Mass was concluded, and then he obeyed the summons.

It may be easily understood from what has been said that Benedict had a right to the honourable titles bestowed upon him, which were none other than the 'Lover of the Blessed Sacrament,' the 'Poor one of the Quarant' Ore,' for he spent the greater portion of his life in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament.

A proof of Benedict's deep humility and obedience may be seen from the following :

His confessor in Rome had desired him, after confession, to go to Communion. Benedict replied, 'I must prepare myself during a few days.' This reply overjoyed the confessor, seeing his humility and reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. But perceiving on the one hand the pure, tender, and spotless conscience of his penitent, and on the other the deep reverence and love which he entertained for the Most Holy Sacrament, he commanded him to communicate that very morning. The servant of God obeyed without hesitation, merely answering, 'Good; I will prepare myself a little more this morning, and then I will communicate.' The confessor, rejoicing at his obedience, blessed him, and recommended himself to his prayers.

Benedict's confessor used to say of him that the expressions of his love would almost appear like folly to those who did not know the deep fire of holy devotion which inflamed his soul with love for our Blessed Lord in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. 'My Good,' he would exclaim,—'my Good! O my All, the alone object of my love, I long after Thee, I sigh after Thee, I wait for Thee! Every delay appears to be a thousand years to me. Come, my Lord Jesus, come; tarry not!' 'This servant of God,' continued his confessor, 'desired to have no heart but what should be in perfect conformity with the heart and will of Jesus. When overcome by the reflection of his own unworthiness, he gave the preference to love and obedience. Knowing himself to be poor in love, he offered for himself all the loving aspirations of the Most Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and all the Saints, which they had made on receiving Holy Communion.'

During the hours of contemplation which Benedict spent before the Most Holy, Almighty God not unfrequently permitted him the vision of His greatness and His majesty. On this account he sighed deeply after union with his highest Good, and longed earnestly to die. In order to prepare himself for the end, which at length he perceived to be approaching, he began

with greater fervour than ever to seek the Sacrament of Penance and that of the Holy Altar. Two days before his death he communicated in the church of St. Ignatius, at the altar of St. Aloysius, with so great desire that the celebrating priest declared he had never felt such deep contrition himself, nor yet such inward consolation, as when he remarked the bright glow on the face of this servant of God, nor did he ever remember to have said Holy Mass with such recollection as on that day.

After Benedict had received Holy Communion he remained in the church, in order to hear a Mass of thanksgiving. The next day he spent for the most part in the church of St. Praxedes, before the Blessed Sacrament, which was being exposed for the Forty Hours' Devotion, although he was already dying. Even on the day of his death he was seen praying in his accustomed place in his favourite church, Dei Monti. His weakness compelled him to quit the church and to sit down upon a stone. From hence he was carried into the house of a certain man called Zuccarelli, where, after a few hours, he fell asleep sweetly in the Lord on the 16th April 1783. Then was heard in the streets of Rome the cry, 'The Saint is dead!' and the crowd which assembled before the house where Benedict's body lay was so great that a guard of soldiers was necessary to keep watch at the entrance. He was buried at the foot of the image of our Lady in the church of Sta. Maria dei Monti, where he had so often and so lovingly prayed.

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE
MOST HOLY REDEEMER, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH.

A.D. 1787.

The very name alone of this beloved Saint brings to mind the thought of the Most Holy Sacrament. His life was absorbed in it. It was, so to speak, the very life of his soul. No Saint ever loved Jesus more dearly in the Blessed Sacrament, none ever prayed to Him with more fire, none sought Him more frequently in His tabernacle; and, as though he would multiply himself in visits to and adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament, he wrote that little golden treatise called *Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar*, thereby to urge numbers, like himself, to bring their love to their Lord and their God dwelling therein. This little book has passed into all languages of Europe, to the welfare of innumerable souls.

After finishing his studies he undertook the office of advocate. He soon won universal confidence by his great learning and his upright conduct. But in the midst of business he did not forget his God and his Saviour. He was overjoyed to know that the help of God availed him more in the performance of his duties in the world than all the powers of his great talents. It was on this account that he never omitted daily Mass. He conducted his cases with the very greatest conscientiousness, but on one occasion he made a mistake about the date of a document, and thereby lost a lawsuit, for which he had diligently prepared. When he saw that worldly glory might be lost by an involuntary error he determined to live only for God, and, exchanging the hall of judgment for the sanctuary, he resolved thenceforth to employ himself as a priest in the eternal salvation of his fellow-creatures.

This resolution was strongly opposed by his father and other relations, but God came to

his assistance. One day, as he was visiting the hospital for incurables in Naples, it appeared to him as though the house fell down, and a voice cried to him, 'What hast thou to do in the world?' This voice pursued him after leaving the hospital, so that he no longer doubted that it was from God, and that he should make an offering of himself to Him. With the words, 'Here I am, Lord; lead me according to Thy good pleasure,' he entered a neighbouring church, where at that moment the Adoration of the Quarant' Ore was taking place. Here he prostrated himself before the Most Holy, praying earnestly that his offering might be accepted. Then taking from his side the sword which it was the custom of the time for advocates to wear, he hung it over the altar of our Lady of Redemption as a pledge of his unconditional surrender to the will of God.



ST. ALPHONSUS ELEVATED IN ECSTASY IN EXTREME OLD AGE AND WEAKNESS.

Alphonsus was twenty-nine years old when he was ordained deacon, and allowed to preach.

The Most Holy Sacrament, the object of his dearest affections, was the subject of his first sermon, and from that time forward he was seen in the chancel of nearly all the churches of the city of Naples, where the Most Holy was exposed, and his sermons ever drew great crowds of hearers. At length being ordained priest, the inward desire and love of his heart knew no bounds.

St. Alphonsus gave himself the difficult but glad task of spreading the devotion of Corpus Christi, and for this object, whenever he held a mission, or wherever it was possible, he brought to bear the beautiful custom of a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. In order to facilitate the public adoration of the Most Holy in poor parishes he provided

candles at his own expense, and by word and by example he drew the people to zealous adoration. The following words of the Saint make known the pious feelings with which he was impressed: 'One thing is certain,' he wrote, 'that next to Holy Communion no act of worship is so pleasing to God, and none is so useful, as the daily visit to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament dwelling upon our altars. Know that in one quarter of an hour which you spend before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament you attain more than in all the good works of the rest of the day.' In his extreme old age, when sickness and weakness deprived him of the power of saying Mass, he endeavoured as long as possible to compensate himself for this great privation by assisting at it in the church. After having heard Mass and received Holy Communion in his oratory in the early morning, he caused himself to be carried into the church and placed on the steps of the altar, where he spent many hours in prayer and assisted at five or six Masses. In the afternoon he was again carried before the tabernacle, and, as a lay brother who served him asserts, prayed from five to six hours before the Blessed Sacrament. When the consecration began, however weak and ill he might be, he endeavoured to rise from his seat that he might adore upon his knees, although it needed all the strength of his servant to replace him in his seat. Moved with compassion for the great sufferings of this servant of God, his confessor, P. Villani, whom he always obeyed like a child, forbade him in future such genuflexions; after which he omitted them.

He was often rapt in presence of the Most Holy Sacrament, at which time he would be heard to exclaim, 'O my God, my Love, O everlasting Love, I love Thee!' He was frequently subject to temptation of the devil, but, said he, 'before the Holy Sacrament I have rest.'

'One morning,' relates P. Tannoia, his biographer, 'in October 1784, being at Pagani, I said Holy Mass whilst St. Alphonsus prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. After a while I heard a slight rustling with his feet, and being convinced that something extraordinary was taking place I glanced sideways, and saw the Saint raised in the air above his seat, although it had been with the greatest difficulty that his servant had succeeded in bringing him into the church and placing him in his chair. After Holy Mass I went into the choir in order to say my thanksgiving, and I saw again the same floating in the air, which happened quietly and easily as though a light feather was being moved. The other brethren observed the same thing one morning when the Saint was occupied with spiritual reading before the Blessed Sacrament. They also remarked a ray of light upon his brow, which was reflected upon the book which he held in his hand.'

When he had attained his eighty-eighth year his great weakness rendered it impossible for our Saint any longer to enjoy this his only consolation. His confessor forbade him therefore to attempt making his meditation before the Blessed Sacrament, where he was almost always in a state of ecstasy. Painful as was this command he obeyed; but so often as the hour of the day arrived in which he had been accustomed to be taken to the church he always fell into a sadness. One day, as he felt this anxiety of love drawing him to the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the lay brother suggested that he should make his meditation in his room. The Saint answered with tears, 'But Jesus is not here!' 'Well, then,' urged the brother, in order to console him, 'let us go into the chapel; there is Jesus on the Cross.' 'Nay,' replied the Saint, 'but the Most Holy Sacrament is not in the chapel.' With great

simplicity he continued to say, 'O my God, Thou seest it dependeth no longer on me to visit Thee!'

His last struggle was so easy that he had ceased to breathe before his disciples, who surrounded him, could observe it. They were weeping and praying for him, whilst he, without a movement, without a change in his blessed countenance, his crucifix and the image of our Lady in his hands, which were crossed over his breast, entered sweetly into the joy of his Lord on the 1st August 1787.

ST. MARY FRANCIS OF THE FIVE WOUNDS.

A.D. 1791.

The father of this Saint, a Neapolitan silk-weaver, Gallo by name, was an industrious man, but unhappily neglected all the duties of religion; her mother, on the other hand, was peace-loving and pious, and suffered much from the ill-temper of her husband. Before the birth of Mary Francis the ill-treatment she received at his hands frequently caused her long and serious fainting-fits. On one occasion her swoon was so deadly that the neighbours ran to call a holy priest, by name Francis Jerome, who was at that moment preaching under the windows of their dwelling. The old man hurried to the apparently dying woman, and remained with her until she had recovered. He took leave of her with the following remarkable words: 'Have a care of the little daughter whom thou shalt bear, for she will become a great Saint.'

The good mother soon after gave birth to a daughter, who in holy baptism received the name of Anna Maria Rose. She was indeed a wonderful child; she was always patient under suffering, and before she had reached the age of two years only desirous to hear of holy things, and did her mother desire to go to church little Anna Maria must ever accompany her. In this way, without knowing it, the dear child loved the Lord. At four years of age, by her earnest request, she was allowed to go to confession, the reason of which was her extraordinary desire for Holy Communion. Her mother took her to a holy priest, who could not conceal his astonishment that a child of such tender years should be so perfectly instructed in the mysteries of the faith, so innocent, and at the same time so full of contrition and desire for Holy Communion. He owned that, had it not been expressly against the custom of the Church, he could not have denied it to this angelic child.

Thenceforward, until the wished-for time arrived, she did not cease to prepare herself for this heavenly gift. God endowed her with the grace of mental prayer and a spirit of extraordinary penance. Kneeling upon the bare ground she spent long hours in prayer, and it is a received fact that before she attained her sixth year she would discipline herself to blood.

When she was seven years of age the happiness she longed for was granted her. Upon receiving the Holy Communion the little maiden was seen with a face beaming with holy joy and a heightened colour, which glow was ever afterwards remarked on her cheek whenever she approached to receive the Blessed Sacrament. This heavenly glow, which her fervour produced, continued to show itself long after she had concluded her thanksgiving; and even on the morning of her death, after her last Communion, this sign of devotion was visible. In the same manner the gift of tears, which she received at her first Communion, continued

with her all through her life, so that not only her clothing, but the very ground around her, was wet with abundant tears.

With frequent Communion Anna Maria was drawn to contemplate very deeply the bitter Passion of our Lord. During these contemplations it is affirmed, by her mother as well



ST. MARY FRANCIS SEES HER GUARDIAN ANGEL.

as by her director, that frequently a most beautiful boy would appear to her and relate to her heavenly things, instructing her in prayer and in the divine mysteries. She believed this boy to be her guardian angel, who would be seen at her side when, by command of her laborious father, she was sitting at the loom, and would give her help when otherwise her frequent contemplation would have delayed the work expected of her, the loss of time which her devotion incurred being always a subject of displeasure to her father. Continual sitting at the loom, however, acted upon her delicate health, and she would have died but for the intercession of the Blessed Mother of God, to whom she turned for help. The weakness which it left behind obliged her father to remove her from the loom, and to place her at the occupation of spinning gold-thread, which she contentedly fulfilled to the satisfaction of her father until she had reached her sixteenth year. At this age she con-

ceived the desire to enter into the Third Order of St. Peter Alcantara. This object, however, was not attained without a severe struggle and heavy crosses.

In the first place, a rich youth, having business with her father, came to Naples, and seeing Anna Maria, begged her of him in marriage. Delighted with the prospect of a noble marriage

for his daughter, Gallo commanded her to prepare as soon as possible for the marriage-feast. Astonished, but perfectly calm, Anna Maria listened to her father until he had concluded, and then, with unusual courage, she gave him a firm denial. 'Father,' said she, 'I desire to know nothing of the world, since for a long time I have desired to enter into the Order of Alcantara, which now I ask your permission to do.' Her father was thunderstruck at this unexpected reply. At first he endeavoured to soothe her with flattering words, and seeing they did not succeed, he broke out into fierce and uncontrollable anger. He beat his daughter, spurned her with his foot, and treated her with such harshness as to cause her to fall into fainting fits. Nevertheless she looked upon this as nothing. Her heart, on the contrary, was full of joy at the thought of having something to suffer for the love of Jesus. She simply offered her suffering, that the Lord would give her strength to endure and her father the grace of conversion. At length it pleased God to open the eyes of the poor blinded man in the following manner:

After having made the Stations of the Cross in the Calvary Church, Gallo joined in conversation with the Franciscan who had conducted the meditation, who, on account of his sanctity, was very much esteemed. He inquired of Gallo concerning his family, and hearing of grown-up daughters, he asked whether it was not in his mind to give them in marriage. 'Ah, father,' replied Gallo, 'say nothing of this to me. The devil is in my house, and I am perfectly bewildered concerning one of these self-same daughters, for whom a most eligible offer has been made, and who is not ashamed nor afraid to say, "No, I will not."' 'And why not?' asked the priest. 'Because,' replied the father, 'she has set her head upon entering the Third Order.' Then the holy man's zeal rose, and he spoke out plainly to him: 'My friend, I believe in fact it is you yourself who are the devil in your house. How do you succeed in answering your conscience by thus withstanding the sacred call of your daughter? Listen, friend. God has commanded me to speak to you. You allude, I believe, to that one of your daughters who has just brought two bunches of flowers, one for the Blessed Sacrament and one for the Immaculate Mother.' Gallo replied in the affirmative. 'Good man,' continued the priest, 'go home at once, call your daughter, and say to her, "My child, enter into that state alone to which God calleth thee."' The father, struck by these words, hurried home, and, seeing how it was God's will, called his daughter to him, and said with tears, 'Good now, Anna Maria, my child, Father Theophilus has commanded me to permit thee to enter into the state which thou desirest, and if thou wouldst enter into the Order, let it be on the approaching feast of the Mother of God.' The servant of God, thanking her father with tears, made all speed to prepare herself for the approaching feast, when, on entering religion, she took the name of Mary Francis of the Five Wounds.

And now the desire of the servant of God was brought to pass—she had become a member of the Third Order of St. Francis under the guidance of the Alcantarians. She continued to remain under her father's roof, but at the age of twenty-three years she took the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Upon her entrance into this new state of life nothing was changed in her household business. She spun as formerly the golden thread, and, with the help of her guardian angel, became so industrious that her father, ever greedy of gain, found his profit doubled by her industry. However, gold-spinning was too arduous an employment for her tender frame. She fell ill, and was

obliged to entreat her father to allow her to learn sewing, ironing, and millinery. Thus she spent her time in endeavouring to assist her father, when again the work appeared to bring her to the gate of death. Then she besought her father to give her simple work to do, that she might have more time for recollection and prayer. This was conceded, but her father, perceiving that her piety and the extraordinary effect which her contemplation had upon her physical frame drew the attention of many who desired to see and converse with his daughter on this account, thought thereby to make profit, and to receive money for the exhibition of her spiritual gifts. But when Mary Francis understood her father's intention she hesitated not flatly to refuse him; whereupon his fury knew no bounds, and without the interposition of her mother he would doubtless have murdered her on the spot, but she falling on her knees at his feet cried, 'My father, forgive me if in this matter I cannot obey you. I cannot sell my soul for money. I should be a deceiver, for how indeed can I be held for a Saint when I am nothing but a sinner? Your will I cannot obey, since God wills it not.' But Gallo remained in the same mind, until the bishop interfered and turned him aside from his intent.

From this time the patient servant of God was tried in every form of suffering, and her only consolation was her love of the Crucified. Our Divine Lord would frequently appear to His servant during her raptures, discovering to her the wounds in His hands and His feet, and showing how she must drink of His chalice to the very dregs. She was driven from home, abandoned by her friends, and wandered from house to house until she found a shelter in that of a certain Dom Pessiri. Here she dwelt for thirty-eight years, and Dom Pessiri, who was a witness in the process of her canonisation, declared that during all that time she was afflicted in mind and in body, and that the penances she imposed upon herself were incredible.

Now whence could the weak body of this tender woman find means to support all the fatigue and suffering with such indescribable patience? Whence but where all Saints have found strength? even in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. We have already heard how Mary Francis, even as a little child, thirsted after the Bread of Angels, and it can be said without exaggeration that through her whole life her heart was consumed with faith and love for Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and that she was literally drawn to the tabernacle in a most marvellous manner. Her companion, Mary Felice, who was always with her, affirms that whenever they entered a church she always directed her steps without mistake to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament (which in Italy is but seldom the high altar), no matter how many altars there might be in the church, even where the ever-burning light happened to be absent, and every other sign of its presence was wanting. When she ceased to dwell in her father's house, and could give herself without reserve to heavenly contemplation, she would go into every church where the Quarant' Ore was celebrated, and there she would remain from morning till evening, always upon her knees, and always like a statue, immovable. At last she made it a rule to visit the All-Holy three-and-thirty times daily, in honour of the thirty-three years of our Lord's life.

One day when Dom Cervellino was saying Mass, and holding between his fingers the sacred particle had turned towards her to say the *Agnus Dei*, he perceived that the sacred Host was no longer in his hand. Full of anguish, he looked around to see where it might have fallen, when, on a sign from Mary Francis, he perceived that she had already received it upon her tongue, which she permitted him to see. The servers, Brother Forelli, Dom Pessiri, and Mary

Felice were all witnesses of the fact, and have asserted it upon oath. In the same marvellous manner a sacred particle left the ciborium and entered into her mouth as she prayed earnestly to the Lord that He would come to her in Holy Communion, for on account of her ecstasy she had been unable to rise and go to the communion-steps in order to receive it.

Her love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was so great that almost always when this Divine Mystery was spoken of, or when she adored before the tabernacle, or received it in Holy Communion, she fell into an ecstasy. This was so deep that her body became cold and stiff as a corpse, in which condition she would remain for hours. From the day of her first Communion this love grew ever greater. In after years worldly affairs became insupportable to her. She would often cut short such conversations as passed in her presence by saying, 'My brother (my sister), let us love God, for He is worthy to be loved. O, how good, how good is God, how full of compassion for us! Happy he who serves so good a Master!' At these words her tears would flow, and her face would be lighted up with an unearthly brightness. This same love she desired to enkindle in all hearts with great fervour, and her heart was wounded with deepest sorrow when in her presence God was dishonoured. Had obedience permitted it, she would have desired to go up and down the streets day and night, crying out as she did in the house, 'O ye men, love your God, for He deserves to be loved. Ah, do not ill-treat Him; do not give Him sorrow! Why do ye misuse His goodness?'

One day, as she prayed in the church of St. Lucy in her accustomed place before the Lady altar, a poor woman begged an alms of her. She raised her eyes to the Mother of God and prayed for the poor woman; then turning to her she pointed with her finger to some pieces of gold lying on the ground, saying, 'Take those: thy Mother has sent them to thee.'

On her death-bed, after having received Holy Communion with her accustomed fervour, she fell into ecstasy during her thanksgiving, in which our Lord revealed to her that it was not His will she should pray for a longer life. On coming to herself she said to her confessor, whom in this matter she had obeyed, 'My father, command me this thing no more; the Lord wills it not.' He replied, 'Mary Francis, this obedience lies in the hand of Abbot Toppi.' 'Yes,' replied she; 'but the Lord says that you, as my confessor, may loose me from this obedience.' Then turning to Forelli, who served her with childlike devotion, she said, 'Francis, I can no more; ask them to lay this obedience on me no longer. To-morrow I will go quietly away, and no one shall know of it.'

Hearing this clear and undoubted revelation of the dying Saint, her confessor replied with tears, 'Since it is so, I will not displease the Lord. Let His holy will be done, and do thou, Mary Francis, fulfil it. I release thee from every obedience.' Father Laviosa then gave her his blessing, and bowing her head she fell into her agony, which lasted three hours; then receiving Holy Communion for the last time, she breathed her soul quietly away, her crucifix upon her lips, on the 6th October 1791. She was canonised by Pope Pius IX. the 29th July 1867.

A MIRACLE OF HEALING AT CRETEIL ON THE SEINF.

A.D. 1802.

Augustina Mourette, daughter of a well-to-do vintner of Creteil, had lost the use of her feet, her arms, and her tongue; she was completely crippled. Had it not been for the expression of her eyes, which still showed signs of life, she might have been supposed entirely without feeling. For eighteen months Augustina lay upon her couch, without a sign of hope for better days.

It was in the year 1802. The concordat, which had been concluded between Napoleon and the Holy Father, had reopened the churches, which the unholy revolution had closed.

The feast of Corpus Christi was to be celebrated publicly and with great pomp throughout the kingdom of France. In Creteil, seeing that it occurred on the feast of their patron Saint, it was to be conducted as magnificently as possible. Now whilst the altars were being erected, and the beautiful ornamentation of leaf-work, moss, and flowers was being prepared, the heart of a young girl was inspired with a thought of love and faith. Henrietta Crété had read in the Gospel how in former times the people had brought the sick and the weak to the Saviour as He passed by. 'Now,' thought she, 'the very same Saviour passeth by our houses; His pity for the unhappy is ever the same; He gave health to one sick of the palsy who had been a sufferer for thirty-eight years; will it be harder for Him to manifest His pitiful almightiness to a poor cripple of eighteen months?' Henrietta formed her plan, and laid it before her companions, who entered into it most earnestly.

From this moment hope seemed to find access to the soul of the sufferer; the tears in her eyes showed the deep emotion of her grateful heart. The following day Augustina was dressed by her friends in her feast-day clothes, placed in an armchair, and carried by them through the midst of the astonished crowd, and placed near the high altar, where the Holy of Holies should rest.

The sound of the bells and of the drums, and the music of the Church's song, announced the approach of the procession. In a short time the priest was giving benediction from the midst of the open-air altar to the thronging multitudes who pressed around.

Then those maidens, dressed in white and with veils on their heads, took up their well-beloved companion in her seat, and placed her down gently a few steps from the altar; then forming themselves in a semicircle round her begged, with earnest faith and hope in her recovery—for a miracle!

The place is thronged with spectators; thousands of eyes are fixed, now on the Blessed Sacrament, now on the crippled girl for whom the prayer goes forth.

The priest was deeply touched with this faith and this union of intention. He came down with the Most Holy in his hands, and placing himself in the midst of the circle of maidens, he uttered the words of the customary prayer over the cripple:

'Domine, qui dixisti, si duo ex vobis consenserint super terram, de omni re, quacumque petierint fiet illis, ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum; da, quæsumus, frequentibus hisce fidelibus in tuo nomine congregatis atque consentientibus testimonium tuæ in medio eorum præsentiae sensibile ut inconcussum habeant te in hoc

sanctissimo Sacramento esse eundem, qui ægrotantes ab omni languore atque infirmitate olim liberavit, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum.'

'Amen!' responded the group of maidens. 'Amen!' resounded far and near from that vast multitude of voices, until the sound died away in the distance.

At this universal response to the supplication of the priest every one perceived the sick girl to rise from her seat without help. With ease she bent her knees in thankful adoration before her Divine Physician. Augustina Mourette was completely healed.

MARY LATASTE, LAY-SISTER OF THE ORDER OF THE SACRED HEART.

A.D. 1822-1847.

Mary Lataste was born in the year 1822 in the French village of Mimbaste, not far from the birthplace of St. Vincent de Paul. Her parents were simple, pious, laborious country people. She was brought up in all feminine employments by her mother, and from her she also received a truly Christian education. Mary was a lively child, and needed all her mother's prayers in order to overcome her natural self-will and thoughtlessness.

At twelve years of age she prepared to receive her first Communion. This preparation made a deep impression on her heart, and she resolved to conquer her besetting sin, which was pride. She began now to pray in earnest, and a change was begun in her. When she had received her Saviour for the first time she was permitted to have a lively sense of His most sacred presence, expressing it frequently in these words: 'How sweet it is to receive Jesus, and to hold Him in one's heart!' 'Truly,' replied her mother; 'then strive henceforth so to live as to have the happiness of communicating frequently.'

Following the counsel of her mother, and strengthened by the grace of God, Mary did not fail of her resolution. Her strong faith was rewarded by the sensible impression she had of His presence in the Most Holy Sacrament. About a year after her first Communion, at the time of Elevation, she remarked a dazzling light upon the altar. Whilst gazing at it her heart filled with love for Jesus there present; the more this love increased the more brilliant grew the light. And this was indeed the dawn of that sun which later on was to be more fully revealed to her. In the following words she described the intercourse which at this time took place between her and her Divine Lord: 'Long have I spoken with Him. I could say but little. I could only utter the words, "Jesus, I love Thee! Jesus, I give Thee my heart; increase my love." Then I took my leave of Him, saying, "My Saviour, bless Thy humble servant." The Divine Saviour waits long; but at length I heard His sweet voice saying to me, "My daughter, I love thee. My daughter, I bless thee. My daughter, I accept the offering of thy heart. My daughter, I bless Thee." Then joyfully I withdrew.'

Mary had great difficulty in overcoming the pride of her nature, and often deeply lamented that she felt no sensible contrition for sin. She also suffered severely from temptation against holy chastity; but the more trying the temptation the more she placed her love for virginity under the protection of her Saviour. Jesus took pity on her, and drew her heart to Himself in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. He so disposed her as it were to chain her to Himself, so that it was no longer easy for her to keep away from it. Sleeping or waking,

working or idle, alone or in company, speaking with God or with men, her heart was always with Jesus in the tabernacle.

At seventeen years of age Mary had to go through a series of inward conflicts with the natural defects of her temper. Satan appeared determined not to lose an opportunity of



OUR LORD APPEARS TO MARY LATASTE.

tempting her, and she knew not sometimes how to withstand him. Our Lord then drew her in her trouble to the tabernacle, and there she found help and victory. When she had nearly accomplished her eighteenth year she found herself on one occasion specially drawn to the church. Upon the road she seemed as one out of herself, and on entering it she saw our Divine Saviour at the altar. He was surrounded by angels, and veiled in a dazzling cloud, in consequence of which she was unable clearly to distinguish Him. The pious girl was speechlessly happy. She approached nearer, and humbly contemplated her Divine Master. He Himself approached her, and showed Himself distinctly to her eyes under a form full of majesty and sweetness.

From this time Mary fled from the world, and desired to live in solitude, or rather with Jesus in the tabernacle. Yet in

this matter, as other Saints have suffered, so also had she to suffer the withdrawal for a time of the sweetness of the sensible presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Her heart was full of heaviness, her evil dispositions seemed to rise up, and she had no courage to fight. But she did not lose heart. She throw herself on her knees, crying with a

loud voice, 'Lord, Thy will be done ; have pity on me !' when lo, this full submission to the will of God received its reward. Jesus Himself appeared to her in His sacred humanity during the three years that followed, so often as she assisted at Holy Mass. At the moment of Elevation she saw a bright light overspreading the altar, in the midst of which the Divine Redeemer manifested Himself to her, sitting upon a throne in glorious majesty, His right hand usually resting upon His Heart.

In these almost daily apparitions of our Lord to His servant the humble girl received from the lips of Jesus Christ the most sublime teaching, and the more she grew in knowledge, so in proportion did our Lord reveal to her the hidden truths of religion. He spoke to her of various mysteries—of His sufferings ; of the marvellous union between God, angels, and men ; of the distinguished prerogatives of His Blessed Mother, who herself frequently appeared and spoke to her. The Lord, however, did not at once enlighten the understanding of His servant, but led her on step by step in the way of perfection. She herself mentions the reproof which He gave her on account of her frivolity. 'I saw,' says she, 'how severe His countenance became. Turning His eyes upon me, and in a tone of rebuke, "Who art thou," He said, "that thou hearkenest so negligently to the words of justice ? Child of pride, knowest thou not thyself ? Thou art nothing in thyself—nothing but sin and corruption. Thinkest thou I speak to thee on account of thy merit ? Nay, but out of pity alone do I converse with thee. I owe thee no teaching. Beware lest thou despise it ; beware of pride ; beware lest thou comport thyself highly with others on this account. My word alone will not make thee blessed ; it is thyself who must coöperate. My word will gain thee no reward, but only by following thereof shalt thou receive reward. My word shall not return to Me void. What I say to thee will go forth to the conversion of millions of heathen. Woe to thee, miserable one, if thou drawest no use from it for thyself ! Know that thou must ever humble thyself before Me ; for thou art but dust and ashes, sin and corruption, and I am the Almighty God, the God of infinite perfection, the three-times Holy God, the Holiest of the holy, even Holiness itself. It is I who raise up kings to their thrones, and before Me the great ones of the earth tremble. I pierce through the heart and the reins. From Me nothing is hid. I know the most secret thoughts of men ; be therefore faithful, and ponder well My words." Thus spake the Saviour severely unto me. His words penetrated into my heart.'

Mary hearkened to the word of God, which consequently bore fruit within her. Gradually she became loosened from the world, self-love had less power over her, she became more amiable towards her neighbours, and continually more drawn to God. In her simplicity she believed that many others shared with her these gifts. Her confessor, to whom she showed all, appeared to set but little store on them ; thus she continued to live in the midst of her family, humble, active, and obedient. She communicated every fortnight, but her longing for that Heavenly Food increasing day by day, she prayed our Lord to tell her how often she might communicate, and He commanded her to communicate weekly.

A great trouble befell her now in the loss of the confessor who had guided her from a child. The new parish priest being strange to her, she could not persuade herself to discover to him all the secrets of her heart ; but our Blessed Lord, willing to preserve her from illusion, bade her to choose him for her director and to hide nothing from him.

Mary obeyed. The priest, struck with astonishment, considered, and determined to put

his penitent, by obedience and humiliation, to the proof. He interdicted all mortifications and frequent Communion. She obeyed him without the least resistance. Nevertheless the worthy priest would not conduct her without advice, and consulted with one well known for his piety and wisdom. They both resolved to require of her to commit to writing what she had seen and heard, and also whatever she should see and hear in future. Mary obeyed the command, trusting to help from above. The Lord came indeed to her assistance, and Himself commanded her to write down His words faithfully and to conceal nothing. Mary did this with all openness and simplicity, but not without much labour and aversion. She wrote usually at night, having prepared herself for it by day whilst herding the cows.



DEATH OF MARY LATASTE.

Her confessor watched her narrowly. There was nothing at all remarkable in her exterior, but only in her behaviour in the house of God her great devotion was visible. One of her young friends remarked to her one day that she appeared very joyous both in entering and in leaving church. 'I know not,' replied Mary, 'how I look, but I know it is in my heart. The reason is simple. The church is the house of God, and when I go in it appears to me that I am then nearest to God, to my Saviour, to the Blessed Virgin, to the angels, and to the Saints. When I leave the church I am happy because I have been nearer to them, and I have been able for a few moments to be in conversation with them. I know not much to say to them, but I say what I know. On earth it is but school-time for heaven. There we shall

better understand how to speak than on earth. I can but stammer now, but I do it with pleasure.' Mary had made herself a rule of life which she kept strictly. She rose very early, and placing herself in spirit before the Blessed Sacrament she offered up her heart and all the occupations of the day to our Lord. Then followed her morning prayer and half-hour's meditation. Then she went to Holy Mass when it was permitted her, said the Rosary, read spiritual books, and in the evening said her night prayers with examination of conscience. She never lay down without finishing her work. Often she slept upon the bare ground.

When she was twenty-two years of age Mary entered into the Order of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. She knew already when she was but nineteen that her life would not be long. The Saviour Himself had told her that she would not reach her twenty-sixth year. Therefore did she desire to live unknown and hidden in the most loving Heart of Jesus, and at length she saw her great desire fulfilled. She was received at Paris, and after a due probation was clothed on the feast of St. John the Evangelist.

In the convent her deep devotion for the Blessed Sacrament soon manifested itself; she would constantly be seen in deep adoration before the All-Holy, as motionless as a statue, apparently absorbed in contemplation. The hours passed unheeded, and had she not been reminded of the time for leaving the church she would often have forgotten it. 'It were difficult,' said the Mother Superior, 'to find anything to blame in this most virtuous creature;' she humbled herself so readily for every little fault, and received every reproof and exhortation so willingly.

In her illness she was sent with some Sisters to Rennes for change of air, where a new convent was opened. She passed her last days under continual trials on the part of her Superior and confessor, which she bore with invincible patience. For the great graces she had received from her Lord and Master she underwent humiliations of every kind. How she accepted them may be seen by the following words: 'O, how sweet it is to receive humiliation, how precious is the taste thereof! Without desiring them, without seeking them, many befall me, God be praised, and they are more precious than voluntary ones.' But what this servant of God thought of her share of trial the following words will show: 'Three years of trial have taught me more than ten years of study. I have learned to understand what man is and what God is. Ah, however learned, however full of holiness a man may be, he is always still a man. But Thou, O God, art always God, and art eternally exalted over all.'

Like all the Saints, Sister Mary Lataste had always the desire to be hidden from the eyes of man. 'I pray God daily,' said she, 'both in death and in life, to remain unknown to man.' 'My soul is in a place of rest and peace, even in the Heart of my Redeemer. He leadeth me in the way which He Himself hath shown me, and which I hope never to leave. He hath chosen for me a humble hidden life, which I live for God in Jesus, and that is all I desire. Grief and sorrow are everywhere; but God hath seen my good will, and hath of His great goodness changed the thorns into flowers for me.'

The change of air, which it was hoped would restore her, had not the desired effect. Her illness increased from day to day. But always full of resignation to the will of God, she was ready for life or for death at His hands. When a Sister begged her to pray for her recovery she replied, 'All as God wills, and nothing but what God wills; when we die we shall be happy to have suffered for Him.'

The moment, however, approached when the prolonged sufferings of this true servant of God were to be brought to an end. On the 9th May 1847 she fell mortally sick. She had not as yet been professed; it was always hoped that she would gain more strength, and she, in her humility, did not press the matter, fearing her unworthiness. Her joy was therefore very great when she learned that she should be permitted to take the solemn vows.

The Blessed Sacrament was therefore brought into her cell. It would be impossible to describe her rapture when Jesus came to her in the Blessed Sacrament; her weakness was, however, so great it was feared she would be unable to pronounce the vows. But Mary summoned all her strength and took the blessed candle in her hand. She begged pardon of the convent for the ill example she had set, and then exclaimed in an ecstasy of love, 'O, is there happiness like mine! I belong to Jesus, all and for ever! I have always loved Him alone! O ancient Beauty, ever new!' For a moment she appeared rapt in God; then, raising her eyes, she said slowly, 'O Godhead! O Trinity! O Unity! O Jesus!' Her whole thanksgiving was only one transport of love. 'O,' exclaimed she, 'how happy is he who hath loved God from his youth! I am Thine, O Jesus. Yes, my God, Thine! O, what a joy to die the bride of the Sacred Heart! What a grace! I deserve it not. Yet Thou, my God, knowest that I have always and in all things desired Thy will alone. Yes, I belong to Thee, O Jesus, to Thee alone!' Then, after a pause, she exclaimed, 'O ever ancient and ever new Beauty! As the hart panteth after the brooks of water, even so longeth my soul after Thee, O Jesus! O, come and take possession of my soul! This surely is the foretaste of heaven!'

At the same time the dissolution of her body was going on rapidly. Her sufferings were frightful. In her worst moments her complaint never went beyond, 'O venerable Mother, how I suffer!' or, 'Ah, how much one must suffer in order to die!' They asked her whether she felt no grief at dying. 'Life or death, it is all one to me,' was her reply. At times she said, 'O, how sweet is death! My heart overfloweth with love!'

On the morning of the 10th May 1847 the spring shone in all its fair beauty. The room in which the dying Sister lay upon her bed of suffering was overshadowed by large trees. A great number of birds were gathered in them, and their tiny songs filled the air with sweet melody. A Sister who sat by Mary's bedside observed to her, 'Sister, listen to the birds, how they sing the praises of God!' A sweet smile was her answer, and kissing her crucifix she gently gave up the ghost.

The instructive and edifying writings which the Venerable Mary Lataste has left behind, and which she wrote under obedience, were examined and approved by the Bishop of Aire, and so passed into many hands. Thus was fulfilled the words of the Divine Saviour, which He said one day to Mary Lataste: 'All that I say to thee shall be spoken over the world, and serve for the salvation of many.' Furthermore our Lord said to His servant, 'I will make thy name to be known through devotion to Me in the Most Holy Sacrament.'

Mary never received any education, nor did she attend any school. All she knew she had learned from her mother, who herself knew but little. Nevertheless her writings prove that her knowledge of the spiritual life and the deep truths of the faith was as divinely imparted as it was profound.

THE VENERABLE ANNA MARIA TAIGI.

A.D. 1837.

In the year 1775 two poor persons—Luigi Gianetti and Santa Masi—journeyed from Siena to Rome, in order to make a home and find work. A lovely little girl accompanied them, by name Anna Maria Antonia Jesualda. Being established in Rome, they placed their daughter in a convent in order to be educated. The child possessed a good heart and a clear head. She soon made rapid progress in all womanly employments, and still more in all exercises of piety, to the greatest admiration of her teachers.

At thirteen years of age she made her first Communion. Her heart was pure and innocent, and full of the most heavenly love for her Divine Saviour. She now left school, and was placed in charge of two pious young women, who guided Anna Maria in the path of virtue. Moved by a desire to assist her parents she returned to her home, where, by the grace of God and prayer and constant Communion, she retained her innocence, and at length, by the advice of others, she determined to enter into the holy estate of matrimony. She prayed that God would send her a God-fearing husband, with whom she might pass her life in the practice of good works. She did not ask to improve her condition, but rather desired to labour with her hands. God did indeed send her a certain Dominic Taigi, who served in the palace of the Cligi family, an excellent pious man, but uneducated and rude in his manners.

Her marriage was blessed with seven children, who were her first care. With her husband—with whom she lived always in peace, although he was somewhat rough with her—she shared the earnings of her work, in order that her family should not want. Her labour being sanctified by prayer, she led the life of an upright God-fearing wife and mother, without thinking of doing more than to secure the salvation of her husband, her children, and herself.

One day she was accompanying her husband to St. Peter's. On the way they met a priest of the Order of Servites of Mary. They were strangers to him; nevertheless at the same moment an inward voice warned him to mark well that woman, for that she would shortly come to him for direction in the way of holiness. Now when Anna Maria entered the church she prayed before the shrines of the holy Apostles SS. Peter and Paul; and as she did so she heard the voice of God in her heart, calling her to greater perfection of life. She obeyed this inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and she gave herself no rest until, conducted by a secret impulse of grace, she found herself at the feet of the Servite priest who had been instructed from above of the future sanctity of the unknown woman whom he met on the way to St. Peter's. 'At length art thou come,' said the priest to her; 'at length art thou in my hands, O soul favoured of Heaven! Courage, my daughter; for the Lord is specially good to thee, and will have thee for His own.'

At these wonderful words the heart of Anna Maria expanded at once entirely to the call of God. With the consent of her husband she laid aside every variety in dress, chose a habit of coarse material, and gave herself up to extraordinary works of penance. One day it pleased God to speak thus in her heart: 'See, O daughter, thy Heavenly Father, who hath chosen thee from the womb that thou shouldst be holy. Nothing mayst thou love but Me alone, and I will lead thee.' From this moment the love of this servant of God had no bounds and

her penances no measure; hair shirts, disciplines, fasts, mortifications of every kind were her delight, and her single desire was to imitate Christ upon the Cross, and to be united with Him.

Her earnest faith, which never failed under any trial, however great, gave her strength to turn to God with a hope which was never disappointed. 'All, all,' she would say, 'must we hope of God, trusting ourselves only to the merit of Jesus Christ; for we of ourselves deserve no good.' Her family troubles and needs increased. 'Let us hope in God that the needful may not fail us'—and truly it never did; and this was all the more marvellous to others, perceiving how so poor a woman supported the weight of so great a family in spite of her

many illnesses and continual afflictions.

With this lively faith was united the most fervent love of God and of her neighbour. God, and God alone, was the one object of her love. Always she thought of Him, everything she referred to Him, all she contemplated in Him. In the midst of her toil she would cry out with a holy transport of love, 'O Lord my God, leave me, let me go! I am but a poor housewife!' When in conversation with others, if her conversation was of Jesus, she would be obliged to break off in order not to fall into ecstasy. At the command of her confessor Anna Maria had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion daily. Cardinal Pedicini says of her on this subject: 'It is utterly impossible to number the ecstasies of Divine Love which this favoured soul had at almost every Communion.' As soon as she had received Holy Com-



THE VISION OF THE VENERABLE ANNA MARIA TAIGI.

munion rapture came as easily to her as vocal prayer comes to others. On one occasion, being in the church of St. Charles before the altar, adoring Him who, in His infinite goodness, vouchsafes to lie hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, and awaiting the moment when she should be united to her Beloved, the Most Holy quitted the hand of the priest whilst saying the *Agnus Dei*, and to the astonishment of all who were present was conveyed by unseen hands to the lips of the servant of God, who was languishing for the divine union.

In the church of the Child Jesus the Lord appeared to her in the sacred Host. She saw instead thereof a fair lily, whose stalk bore a flower in full bloom, and upon this flower, as upon a throne, appeared, as it were, the purity of the Redeemer in the full glory of His

supernatural beauty to the eyes of His humble servant. Whilst she considered the loveliness of her good Lord she heard a voice saying, 'I am the Flower of the Field, the Lily of the Valley—I am thine alone.'

On one occasion a priest having given her an unconsecrated Host she knew it by the bitterness it left in her mouth, but without losing presence of mind she remained in prayer as usual; afterwards, however, on mentioning the circumstance to her confessor, the priest was called, who confessed his fault, and glorified God in the holiness of His servant.

The fervent devotion of the Venerable Anna Maria to the Most Holy Eucharist, and her equal devotion to the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer, led her naturally to the knowledge and love of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. She united herself to those most perfect intentions and virtues it displayed when offered on the Cross for all mankind. She would weep at the thought of the destruction of so many souls, which caused all that suffering to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and prayed and did penance for them. Except the necessary care for her family, she occupied herself alone about the things of eternity, the honour of God, and the salvation of her fellow-creatures.

In the case of Anna Maria the promise of our Lord, 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted,' was wondrously verified, and in the following manner. In the solitude of her room, whilst she chastised her body with the discipline, she saw for the first time a wonderful sun, which then, however, shone with a heavy dark light. A holy horror overcame her, and when she, in obedience to her confessor, inquired of God what this appearance should signify, He replied, 'This is a glass in which I will permit thee to look, whereby thou shalt understand good and evil.'

The sun was surrounded by beams, and towards the end of the upper rays was surmounted by a very thick crown of thorns; two of these thorns were prolonged on either side towards the lower portion of the disc, where they crossed one another. In the centre of the sun was a venerable form clothed in shining garments, majestically sitting with his eyes raised towards heaven, as one who is in ecstasy. The dazzling light of this sun would have weakened the strongest eyesight. Nevertheless Anna Maria, with an eye which was nearly blind, distinguished the object, and was able to endure it.

In this sun Anna Maria saw the condition of the consciences, not only of those who were near, but of those afar off when her thoughts were occupied with them. She saw the blessed and unhappy fates of the departed, the poor souls who had yet much to suffer, and the reasons wherefore. If a soul were lost the rays of the sun would part on one side, and a dreary hell would appear, in which those souls were seen in mourning garments. If the souls were in heaven their countenance would be joyous, and she recognised their virtues and the condition of glory which they enjoyed in heaven.

These are but a few of the extraordinary manifestations which were vouchsafed to this humble servant of God, and which were doubtless revealed to her in order to confound the worldly wisdom of men and their pride by the lowliness of her whom God chose to be His instrument for the purpose.

It would not be easy to recount the conversions which her supernatural knowledge brought about, nor the blessings which the servant of God was the means of procuring for Rome. The sufferings of the Church, more especially those of the Pope and his successors, were clearly

made known to her, and she prayed, suffered, and did penance, in order to gain for them help from above. The present sufferings of the Church were known to her, but the triumph in store was as surely revealed as the rest, and God assured His humble servant that she would never be deceived in what that sun revealed to her.

As Anna Maria advanced in years she advanced continually in the ways of holiness. Her love of poverty, her love of suffering, her love of God and of her neighbour, by the grace of a great purity of heart, became ever purer and more complete. 'O my dear daughter,' Jesus said to her in an ecstasy, 'I am the Flower of the Field; I am fair, and I am all thine, as I am for all who take up their cross and follow in My footsteps. The children of the Cross are My children, and when they suffer I am constrained to love them more and more. He who desireth to win heaven must lead a life of penance, and he who suffereth shall not be deceived, for he walketh in a way of great security.'

Anna Maria was called to her rest in her forty-seventh year. On her deathbed she took leave of her husband in the tenderest manner, thanked him for all his care; then blessing her children she said to them, 'Have Jesus before your eyes, and His precious Blood ever as an object of your veneration. You will have much to suffer, but the Lord will sooner or later console you. Observe His commandments; be devout to the Blessed Mother of God, who will be in my stead a mother to you. Never let concord and heavenly peace be interrupted in your houses, which are the greatest blessings of a family. May the glorious martyr Philomena assist you, who will always be your protectress upon earth.'

After pronouncing these words Anna Maria begged them all to leave her, and, like so many Saints who were conformed in their deaths as in their lives to the image of their crucified Redeemer, after a three hours' agony the soul of this blessed servant of God fled to its home in heaven on the 9th June 1837.

MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF A JEW BY MEANS OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST.

A.D. 1862.

In the year 1847 the devotion of the month of May was carried out with great solemnity in Paris at the church of St. Valère. Singers in choirs and other friends of music had united in order to perform magnificent music which attracted the people. The Prince of Moskowa conducted the choir. Now it happened that one evening he invited the then well-known musician and pianist Hermann Cohen, a Jew, born in Hamburg, but residing at that time in Paris in order to give concerts, to conduct the choir for him. Out of friendship for the Prince, and love for music, Hermann accepted the invitation. He placed himself at the head of the choir, without in the least taking part in the devotion of the faithful. During the sermon he was irreverent, and chatted; but when the moment arrived for the benediction of the Most Holy he himself relates, 'although I was not at all moved to bow the knee with the rest of the multitude, I felt within myself an inexplicable commotion. My soul, accustomed to the distractions of the world, seemed to find itself again, so to speak, and was at the same time conscious that something had passed within which was until now quite unknown. Without giving it a thought I bowed my knees. At the instant that the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given I felt for the first time an indescribable but agreeable movement within

me. On the following Friday I went again, and the same interior movement occurred, only much stronger than before, and I felt as if a weight pressed upon my back, requiring me to bend the knee once more. Against my will I obeyed the impulse, when suddenly the thought rushed overpoweringly into my soul, *Thou must become a Catholic!*

‘A few days after this I happened to be one morning in the neighbourhood of the same church of St. Valère. The bell rang for Holy Mass. I entered into the house of God, and remained an immovable spectator of the Most Holy Sacrifice. I heard one, two, three Holy Masses, without thinking of returning. I could not understand what kept me. Towards evening I was again led to the same church, against my will—the bell seemed to call me. I found that the All-Holy was exposed, and as soon as I perceived it I was drawn irresistibly to the communion-rail and fell upon my knees. I bowed myself this time without resistance at the moment of benediction, and when I rose up I felt a strange sense of rest enter into my soul. I went back to my room and lay down upon my bed, but during the whole night my spirit, whether waking or sleeping, was ever busied with the Blessed Sacrament. I longed with impatience for the time when Holy Mass should be said, and from thenceforward I heard daily many Masses at St. Valère with an interior joy which filled my whole being.’

Up to this time Hermann Cohen had looked upon Catholic priests as monsters, which it was a man's duty to avoid; but now he was, by an irresistible impulse, obliged to seek a Catholic priest. A pious lady directed him to the Abbé Legrand, whose advice he determined now to follow. ‘But the devil,’ Hermann goes on to say, ‘was not yet overcome. Old occupations, concerts, pleasure parties, and feasts, still took possession of me.’ His concerts, which he gave with the assistance of the first professors of music, brought him large sums of money, which like the Prodigal he spent on pleasure, so that his soul had become the sport of his passions. Now that the moment had come when he must choose between the world, whose favourite child he had become, and the Crucified, whom hitherto he had despised, the storm rose up against him on all sides. For some time his soul, unaccustomed to resistance, seemed to waver, but the grace of God conquered.

‘At this time,’ he continues, ‘I went to Ems to give a concert. Here, in spite of my friends, who sought to turn me from my custom, I visited the church and attended Holy Mass; and here in Ems it was that I received the marvellous grace of supernatural contrition. It was on the 8th August 1847, and this is how it came to pass:

‘I went to Holy Mass. As usual the ceremonies chained my attention; but by degrees the prayers at the Holy Sacrifice and the singing began to arouse in me perplexities and holy fear, and the grace of God took powerful and free possession of me. At the elevation of the sacred Host I burst into a flood of tears, which flowed in abundance over my burning cheeks. . . . O happy moment! O moment blessed for ever in the salvation of my soul! I remember to have wept in my childhood, but never such tears as those. Thus whilst I wept I felt in my wounded heart the sharpest remorse of conscience for my whole past life. Immediately, and of myself, I began to make a general confession of all my wicked deeds which since my youth up I had committed. I saw them all there heaped up in thousands, as they deserved the righteous anger of an offended and a just Judge.

‘But at the same time I felt a peace and consolation until now unknown, which appeared to fill my soul with assurances of God's forgiveness—that He would have pity on my deep

grief, my bitter sorrow, my earnest repentance. Yes, I felt within me that He had given me the grace, which He had accepted, of a firm determination to love Him above all, and in future to turn to Him entirely. When I quitted that church I was already a Christian; so much a Christian indeed as one can be before receiving holy baptism.'

On the 28th August of the same year (1847) Hermann Cohen received holy baptism at the hands of the Abbé Legrand. His heart was completely turned with loving earnestness to God. 'I am,' said he, 'like a child on its mother's bosom. I will nothing, I fear nothing more. I desire only to be led. I have no care what others may think about me. . . . I judge not myself, neither do I fear to be judged. O, how precious is the knowledge of Jesus Christ! With Augustine let me die to all that Thou art not, O God.'

After holy Confirmation the fruits of the Holy Ghost were soon apparent in his life; the world loosened its hold of him; his musical engagements were fulfilled as a mere duty. He never tired of saying, 'I have found Him whom I love. He belongeth to me and I to Him. Never more will I let Him go.'

A few months after his conversion, Hermann tarried one evening in the chapel of the Carmelites, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. At length one of the nuns approached him, and reminded him that it was time to close the church. 'Willingly,' said he, '*after Benediction.*' The Sister replied that there would be no Benediction that evening. 'Then I will go up,' answered he, 'when all the rest shall have departed.' 'They are only women,' remarked the Sister, 'who spend the night in adoration before the Most Holy Sacrament. The church is closed during the night, and only women are permitted to be present.' Hermann obeyed at once, and left the church, and the thought suggested itself to him that it were well if men, who so frequently spent the night in sin and debauchery, could be brought also to a nocturnal adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. He undertook at once to visit the churches, and spoke with such zeal and prudence to the young men that he succeeded in laying the foundation of the Men's Association for the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. On the 6th December 1848 the first nocturnal adoration of the Most Holy took place, and since that time the confraternity has extended itself all over France.

Hermann entered the Order of the Carmelites. On the 6th October 1849 he received, at the convent of Broussey, the habit of the Order, under the name of Augustine Mary of the Blessed Sacrament.

In the following year his mother, a Jewess, came to the monastery of Agen, where Hermann was living, in order to persuade him to return to the religion of his fathers. He took her tenderly in his arms, and his only reply was, 'Mother, I am happy.' When Hermann had received priest's orders, and his sister saw his glowing and fervent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as he bore it under a canopy, her heart was softened, and it pleased the Divine Redeemer a second time to draw a heart to Himself in the same marvellous way that He had drawn that of Hermann.

A few days after his ordination he preached for the first time, and the subject he chose was frequent Communion. This was the one leading thought of his life. Like Elias, the first Father of his Order, he had found in the desert the supernatural bread of heaven. He had tasted it, and strengthened by the celestial food, like Elias he had wandered to the mount of God, to the new Jerusalem, to the Holy Church of Jesus Christ. In return for his entire surrender of

himself to God he had found peace of heart in its height and in its depth—that peace which the world knows not of, which it can neither give nor take away.

As Hermann Cohen the musician had journeyed through France and England, and charmed the world with the perfection of his art, so now, as the poor Carmelite monk, F. Augustine, he journeyed barefoot through France and England, until at the feast of Pentecost, 1862, he found himself in Rome, everywhere preaching of the glories of the Blessed Sacrament, and of the joys which they possess who embrace it with love, who adore it with fervour, who receive it with glowing desire, so that he rightly received the name of the Preacher of the Most Glorious Sacrament. In Rome he became acquainted with Cardinal Wiseman, who invited him to London to preach; and the fruit of his preaching may be seen in the beautiful church of St. Simon Stock, Kensington, of which he was the founder and the first prior. F. Hermann died a few years ago. R.I.P.

MIRACULOUS APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD IN THE CONSECRATED HOST.

A.D. 1865.

The following miracle took place in the Loreto Chapel at Bordeaux in the year 1865.

The Sisters of St. Joseph, with their pupils, were assembled in their chapel. It was a Thursday, on which day it was customary for them to expose the Most Holy, in order to give Benediction. A venerable priest attached to the cathedral of Bordeaux knelt in profound recollection at the foot of the altar whilst the *Pange Lingua* was being sung by the choir. The server remarked a wonderful change in the monstrance. Starting up, he touched the priest on the shoulder, and said with emotion, ‘Father, father! the most dear Redeemer appeareth!’ The priest, on raising his eyes, beheld the same miracle; but he endeavoured to conceal his surprise, and replied that it might easily be an effect of the light, whilst, nevertheless, he directed his whole attention to the appearance. At length there could be no doubt upon the subject: the beloved form of the Redeemer became ever more distinct. The servant of God fell trembling and full of reverence prostrate on the ground. Two little girls, who had but lately received their first Communion, happened to be near, praying with childlike faith. Suddenly one of them perceived the bright countenance of our Lord, and calling the attention of her companion, exclaimed in a whisper, ‘See, the dear Redeemer appears!’ and both did reverence before the Divine Majesty.

In the mean time on all sides the words are whispered, ‘The dear Saviour appeareth!’ and many of the children have the happiness of beholding the sacred humanity of Jesus. But the moment for Benediction is come, and still Jesus is visibly present upon the altar. The priest approaches the altar with a courage almost supernatural, sinks in adoration before the presence of the King of kings, then takes (we quote his own words) the Saviour in his hands, and turns Him towards the congregation, that He may Himself give the blessing. His eyes fall downwards upon the head of the Saviour, upon which he remarks a tonsure similar to that of a priest, and he also observes a broad red band which hangs over the shoulders and breast, of which both ends unite on one side of the God-Man. The apparition continued until the moment of the genuflexion after the blessing, upon which it vanished.

ANOTHER APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD IN THE CONSECRATED HOST.

A.D. 1867.

On the 5th February 1867 the Quarant' Ore was being observed in a Catholic church at Dubna, a little town in the province of Poland. The church had been spared during the revolution, and the crowds and devotion of the people were very great. The watchers who were close to the altar suddenly remarked that soft glowing rays streamed from the monstrance, and that in the midst of the Host appeared the distinct form of our Redeemer in His holy adorable humanity. This miraculous appearance continued the whole time of the Forty Hours' Devotion. Catholics and schismatics, who were attracted to the church either by devotion or curiosity, all equally saw the apparition. The parish priest was the first to examine into the miracle, and many men were led hither in order to examine it more nearly. They were so struck with fear that they scarcely knew how to ascend the altar-steps.

The news of this supernatural occurrence spread from mouth to mouth in the town and in the neighbourhood. Since it was affirmed by witnesses of schismatical persuasions it came to the ears of the police. On this account the parish priest was called upon to give evidence before the director of police. The governor of Schitomir was informed of it, and it was forbidden under pain of imprisonment to speak of the apparition. The priest gave into the bishop's hands a detailed account of it; but that spiritual authority earnestly besought all the eye-witnesses thereof to keep silence on the subject, as he feared that the government would in consequence order the church to be closed.

THE PIOUS MAIDEN MARY VON MÖRL, USUALLY KNOWN AS THE ESTATICA.

A.D. 1868.

On the right bank of the Etsch, in South Tyrol, lies the charmingly situated town of Kaltern. It was in this place that, on the 10th October 1812, Mary von Mörl was born. Being piously brought up by a holy mother, she grew in all Christian graces till her fourteenth year. At ten years of age she received her first Communion, and the intensity of faith with which she habitually partook of the Divine Eucharist not unfrequently caused her to fall into fainting fits.

At fourteen years she had the misfortune to lose her mother, when the heavy charge of a large family of brothers and sisters fell upon her. This was a serious undertaking for one who suffered very delicate health, and who, on account of her pious inclinations, was obliged to bear many contradictions and misunderstandings on the part of every one in the house. But she struggled against every movement of impatience by bodily mortification, fasting, and prayer. She rose at two in the morning in order to pray, and at the first stroke of the bell would be seen in church; and if it were not unlocked she would kneel at the door and pray. Without being taught she practised mental prayer, and meditated most devoutly on the divine mysteries, specially those concerning the Passion of our Lord and of the Most Holy Sacrament.

But at an early age Mary showed signs of the physical weakness which later on asserted itself. Her illnesses often brought her to death's door; while her father, considering it to be a

nervous state which could be controlled, treated her somewhat harshly, in order to cure her, as he hoped. Whenever it so happened she would retire into the church, and on her return she would speak lovingly to her father of those things which she had begged of God for him.

Now when she had attained her eighteenth year she had a very serious illness, during which she suffered great agonies of pain. She asked the physician, therefore, whether he looked upon her full recovery as possible; and when he replied that he could not answer for it, she said resolutely, 'Now, if recovery is not to be expected, I desire no alleviation.' Besides these bodily sufferings she was tormented by spiritual trials, which God permitted for her sanctification. All these trials she bore with the greatest patience out of love for her crucified Lord; but when her father desired her to pray that she might be freed from this plague she obeyed, and the temptation departed immediately. Daily she grew more and more satisfied in contemplating the majesty of God in the Most Holy Sacrament, and on this subject she continually fell into a state of ecstasy. These ecstasies usually followed upon her Communions. At these times her state of ecstasy continued so long, and she was so



MARY VON MÖRL IN ECSTASY.

completely out of herself, that she was left in her room alone, for she needed nothing of any one; she was with Jesus, and Jesus was with her.

On the feast of the Purification, 1832, being in a rapture after Holy Communion, Mary folded her hands, raised her eyes to heaven, lost all external consciousness, and remained in

this state of spiritual illumination for twelve hours, to the great consternation and astonishment of her family. They then called her confessor to speak to her, and he said, 'Mary, wilt thou not give me a sign?' She looked at him sweetly, believing she had but just received Holy Communion, and inquiring whether the priest who had brought it to her had yet departed. After repeating the question, and perceiving all to be in a state of astonishment, she learned that, though the time had appeared so short, many hours had elapsed since she received Holy Communion. Being asked of her state during those hours, she replied that she had been with God, and had prayed much and seen much, but that nothing in the world could describe the blessedness and the beauty of all she had felt and seen.

From this time the state of rapture returned daily, until, on the feast of Corpus Christi in the year 1833, it pleased God to unite this blessed soul to Himself in a most perfect manner, which lasted to the day of her death.

On the feast of Corpus Christi, 1833, she suddenly raised herself from her bed, and knelt in rapture for a long time. It was the Blessed Sacrament which she saw in spirit. After this the ecstasies were almost continuous. Her position was a kneeling one upon her bed. She never lay down except under obedience, and then it would be but for a few moments, whilst her hands were folded, and her eyes were fixed without movement of the eyelid, and the flies themselves could move over the orbs without causing pain or irritation. She had speech, but spoke not; her eyes were open, and she saw not; she lived, and felt not. She was clothed when necessary: she troubled herself not; she knew not when she moved; she slept not, ate not, but led in this state of ecstasy the spiritual life of which St. Paul spoke when he said that he had been caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not permitted for men to speak.

At length, this continued miracle becoming known to the surrounding country, the people flocked in crowds to see her; so in order to secure sufficient repose for the sufferer, she was received into the convent of the Poor School Sisters. She was assigned a small square room for her lodging, where she lived more than thirty years in a continued state of ecstasy, but obedient to the voice, or even unuttered will, of her confessor. The Holy Sacrifice was, by permission of the bishop, celebrated twice a week in her chamber, in order that she might partake of Holy Communion.

On the days when this happiness was permitted her she would suddenly rise from her recumbent posture, and supporting herself as it were on the points of her feet she would appear as though she desired to go forward to meet Jesus; but she received the Most Holy upon her knees, and during thanksgiving would remain in the same position. Her cell overlooked the chapel of the convent, and her bed was so placed that in her meditation she could look towards the spot where the high altar stood on which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved.

As soon as Holy Mass began in the church she would go out of herself in ecstasy; her hands would fold themselves, and she would lay motionless there; but her spirit was in the church, where the priest was saying Mass. She knew the exact moment when the words of consecration were spoken, and she would be heard to whisper, 'Jesus, I live for Thee, I die for Thee! Thine I am in life and in death! Amen.' And at the moment when she had pronounced the 'Amen' she would sink back into her place.

On the 5th August 1834, the day on which her brother said his first Mass as a Capuchin, she was raised up on her bed the whole day with outstretched arms. She assisted at all the Masses which were said in Kaltern, at the different hours. She knew always the moment of Elevation. This was proved by two persons who had set their watches together, the one being in her room, the other in the church. This also happened whenever Benediction was given from the altar.

The Blessed Sacrament was not only the life and nourishment of her soul, it was also that of her body. She never tasted any food except a little fruit and the juice of grapes, occasionally a piece of bread or simple meal. But she never touched meat or broth of any kind. Her weak frail body appeared to receive all its sustenance from the Blessed Sacrament, and in spite of her great bodily suffering she attained the age of fifty-six years. These sufferings were always worse on Fridays, when she contemplated the sufferings of our Lord.

At length the hour of her dissolution approached. She had already foretold that she should die in the winter of 1868. From Christmas until January 11, 1868, when she died, the pains she endured increased in violence. She took nothing now but a little lemon-water, and she received the Blessed Sacrament daily about midnight. On the morning of Saturday, towards half-past three, two hours after receiving the Body of the Lord, she passed away to her rest. Her last struggle had been easy. She lay perfectly still, whispering from time to time the name of Jesus, and the words 'How beautiful! how beautiful!' then her breath became slower, and she slept sweetly in death. A pure holy soul had indeed departed from the Cross.

Her body was exposed in the convent chapel, and during the two days that it lay there it was visited by thousands. She lay looking like a bride, with a white veil on her head and a crown at her feet. Many who saw her felt as though they had lost one of their own family, and could with difficulty tear themselves away. Thus passed the soul of Mary von Mörl from her crucifixion on earth to her paradise of joy in heaven.

PIUS IX.

A.D. 1848.

The 15th November 1848, being the day on which Pellegrino Rossi, the Pope's minister, fell dead under the hand of the assassin on the steps of the palace of the Cancellaria, the long-suppressed rebellion broke out in all its fury. Many, who but a few days before had implored the Papal benediction, now turned their arms against the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Even those whom the Father of Christendom had but lately released from prison and recalled from banishment were to be seen at the head of an armed rabble at the gate of the Vatican palace, firing into the chamber of the princes of the Church, and murdering before his very eyes the Pope's secretary, Mgr. Palma.

It may be imagined what was the grief of our Holy Father, and how in his great distress he implored light from Heaven to guide him in this frightful emergency. His prayers were answered, as will be seen. On the 21st of November 1848 he received the following remarkable letter:

‘Most Holy Father,—In the journey which his banishment necessitated to Valence in France, where he died, the great Pope Pius VI. carried in his bosom the Most Holy Eucharist, or caused it to be borne in the carriage with him by one of his domestic chaplains. In the Most Sublime Sacrament of the Altar he found light for his way, strength in his suffering, consolation in his pain, and the Viaticum which he needed for his journey into eternity. Now it happens that in a most authentic manner I find myself in possession of the little vessel which served him for that pious, touching, and memorable purpose. I venture to send it to your Holiness. Inheritor of the name, the office, the virtues, the courage, and, so to speak, of the trials of the great Pius VI., perchance your Holiness may attach some little value to this modest but attractive relic. I trust it will not actually have the same destination, but who may know the secret purposes Divine Providence hath with regard to your Holiness? I pray for you in faith and in love. I leave the vessel in the same little silk bag which held it, and of which Pius VI. made use, and which is exactly in the same condition as when it rested on the bosom of that immortal Pope. The remembrance of the kindness of your Holiness on the occasion of my visit to Rome will ever remain gratefully impressed upon my heart. I pray you, Holy Father, to impart to me the apostolic benediction which I ask at your feet.

‘PIERRE. Bishop of Valence.

‘Valence, 15th October 1818.’

When the Holy Father had read this letter, and perceived therein the hand of God, he at once resolved without delay to quit his dominions. But who should assist him to escape the hands of his furious enemies? For this too had God provided. Repeatedly had the ambassador of the King of Bavaria, the noble Count von Spaur, offered every service to the Holy Father, not merely as the representative of a Catholic Power, but as a personal devotion to the Head of the Church in his present necessities. Therefore, on the 22d November, the Holy Father communicated to him through Cardinal Antonelli that he accepted his good-will, not so much out of care for his own person as for the safety of the apostolic chair; and seeing he had determined upon leaving Rome he could not, he felt, in this extreme need, make choice of any one but a man of such tried virtue and fidelity.

The Count imparted the resolve of the Holy Father to his courageous-hearted wife, whose coöperation he required in order to carry out the dangerous undertaking of the flight of the Pope. According to their plan the Countess, with her son Max and his tutor, the priest Sebastian Liebel, started on the morning of the 24th of November for Albano, where a messenger, or huntsman of the Count, was to meet them and inform her if all had succeeded, in which case she with her husband and the Holy Father would leave Albano together, or in the event of failure she would return to Rome.

The secret of the flight of the Pope was committed to many persons, and amongst others to the French ambassador, the Duc d’Harcourt. When the hour fixed upon had arrived the Duke proceeded to the Papal palace and requested an audience. It was five o’clock in the evening when he entered the Pope’s chamber. The Holy Father, who had already placed in his bosom the Blessed Sacrament in the pyx which had been sent him by the Bishop of Valence, now laid aside his pontifical robes in presence of the ambassador, dressed himself as a simple priest, put on glasses, and thus apparelled quitted the chamber by a door leading into some empty apartments in connection with the passage which conducted to a gate which



HIS LATE HOLINESS PIUS IX., POPE.

BISHOP OF ROME AND VICAR OF JESUS CHRIST, SUPREME PONTIFF OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, PATRIARCH OF THE WEST, PRIMATE OF ITALY,
ARCHBISHOP AND METROPOLITAN OF THE ROMAN PROVINCE, SOVEREIGN OF THE TEMPORAL DOMINIONS OF THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH

had for a long time been unused. At the great door of the Vatican palace a carriage was in waiting, which had come and gone many times, as though in the service of the palace, and which was now intended to convey the Pope out of his own dwelling. This was the moment of danger, but by the mercy of God the Holy Father succeeded in reaching the principal door, where he entered the carriage provided without discovery, and drove away through the midst of the countless soldiers on watch, and city guard, who observed him not.

In the mean time the Countess von Spaur, according to agreement, accompanied by her son and his tutor, was journeying to Albano. There she learned from her husband's messenger the success of the flight of the Holy Father, and that they now awaited her in Ariccia. Although the night was dark and it threatened heavy rain she started at once for Ariccia. She drove quickly through the town, and then slowly up a steep ascent where the valley opens between Ariccia and Genzano. Here she was startled by a long shrill whistle, and believing herself to be surrounded by banditti, or perhaps worse, she trembled not a little. The call was repeated and the carriage stopped. Leaning from the open window to inquire what the matter might be, a carabineer courteously advanced and asked her wishes. She then perceived him to be one of the street guards, and on looking round she saw her husband, and behind him another carabineer, whilst a man in dark clothing leaned against the railings which protected the street. To him (for she knew him to be the Pope) she addressed the words agreed upon. 'Doctor,' exclaimed she, 'come at once with me into this carriage, for I don't like travelling by night.' One of the carabineers opened the carriage-door, let the steps down; the doctor stepped in, the soldier closed it again, wished them a safe journey, with the assurance that they might be quite at ease, as the road was free from danger.

The rest may be told in the words of the noble Countess herself: 'It was ten o'clock at night; our Holy Father sat on the left side of the carriage and the priest Liebel sat opposite, I on the right, and my son opposite me. My husband and the huntsman had mounted on the seat at the back of the carriage. I was at first overpowered with the thought of what had occurred, and I said in a few words, which were incomprehensible to the others, how much it cost me not to fall on my knees before the noble representative of the Saviour, who at that moment carried the Most Holy on his bosom in the pyx which the Bishop of Valence had sent him. But he, taking in good part my emotion, replied that I should be at peace and fear nothing, for the *Lord was with us!*

'In this way we reached Genzano, where we changed horses and lighted the lamps. In those moments, when the light fell upon the features of Pius, I perceived the astonishment of my son and his tutor, and that they shrank each into his corner as far as they could.

'During the whole journey he did nothing but pray for his people. He afterwards said the Office with the priest Liebel, and other prayers. At a quarter before six we reached Terracina. When we left this place the Holy Father begged me to inform him when we should reach the boundary which divided the Papal States from the kingdom of Naples; and when I said, "Holy Father, here is the frontier," he replied that now he could feel safe, and with tears he pronounced the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving to Almighty God.'

Under the protection of the Ever-blessed Sacrament, which had snatched him so marvellously out of the hands of his enemies, the Holy Father arrived in safety at Mola di Gaeta, a fortified town of the kingdom of Naples, where King Ferdinand, apprised of his

coming, appeared with his whole family, and entertained him with the greatest reverence for seventeen months. At length with the assistance of France the rebellion in Rome was suppressed, and in God's own time did Pope Pius pass to his happy rest, leaving the bark of St. Peter, which he had so safely steered through the waves of unhappy times, to his noble successor.

THE END.

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